

GULAB SINGH'S SERIES OF ORIENTAL BOOKS.

THE BAGH-O-BAHAR
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

BAWA CHHAJJU SINGH,

*Head Master, Middle Department of the Dayanand
Anglo-Vedic College.*



Lahore:
RAI SAHIB M. GULAB SINGH & SONS,

1912.

Price 6 Annas.

Copyright Reserved.

THE FOUR DURWESH.

Now I commence my story ; listen to it attentively, and do justice to its merits. In the "Travels of the Four Durwesh"** it is thus written and the narrator has related that in former times there was in Rûm † (Turkish Empire) a king whose innate sense of justice was as strong as that of *Nausherwan*, ‡ and whose generosity was equal to *Hâtim's*. § He was called *Azîl Bakht* Constantinople,|| otherwise known as Stambol, was his seat of government. In his reign the peasant was happy, the treasury full, the army satisfied and the poor (were) at ease. They were so comfortable and well off, that in their homes the day was a time of pleasure and enjoyment, and the night a *Shab-i-barât*.¶ Thieves, robbers, pick-pockets, swindlers, and all other persons, who belonged to the category of the vicious and dishonest, he totally blotted out of existence, and not a trace of them allowed to remain in his empire. The doors of houses remained unshut all night, and the shops of the *bazar*** were open. The travellers and wayfarers chinked gold as they trudged along over plains and through woods, and no one asked them, "How many teeth have you in your mouth, and whither are you going?"††

* Both *Mu' Ummân* and the original author *Amîr Khushâ* use the word in the singular and correctly, for, according to the Persian syntax, a substantive preceded or followed by numeral adjective, dispenses with the plural termination, as *shash top*, six guns. The word *Durwesh* means a beggar who goes about plying people for alms. It is also used in a good sense and then it means a person remarkable for piety. The Arabic and Hindi equivalents are *faqir* and *joyi* respectively.

† Sometimes called, in modern times, Roumania. At present the word is applied to Turkey in Europe and Asia, originally it was applied to the Eastern Roman Empire.

‡ King of Persia, died in 578 A.D. He was celebrated for his wisdom and justice. The prophet Muhammad was born during his reign. The Persian writings are profusely interspersed with anecdotes of *Nausherwan's* wisdom and justice.

§ The proper name of a most liberal Arabian, surnamed طَبَّاطَبَىٰ from his wife طَبَّاطَىٰ His adventures are embodied in an elegant Persian book called *Isâ'â Hâtim Tâ'i*.

|| Called also *Kastuntinya* by the Persians, and *Istambol* or *Islambol* by the Turks.

¶ The two words used in this sentence are 'Id, and *Shab-i-barât*. The former may be called the *Mahomedan Easter*, and the latter is a festival which falls on the 14th of the month of *Sha'îban*, on which illuminations are made, and all good *Musalmans* make offerings and oblations in the name of deceased relations.

** An assemblage of shops where goods are exposed for sale; a market place.

†† An impertinent question, something like the English interrogation "Does your mother know you are out?"

There were thousands of cities and towns in that monarch's dominions, and many princes paid him tribute. Though he was so great a sovereign, he never for a moment neglected his duties or his prayers* to his God. He had all the necessary comforts of this world; but male issue, which is the fruit of life, was not in the garden of his destiny; for this reason he was frequently pensive and sorrowful; and after the five regulated hours of prayer, he would address himself to his Maker and say, "O Lord, thou hast, through thy goodness infinite, blessed thy humble creature with every comfort, but thou hast given no light to this dark abode.† This desire alone remains unrealized, that I have no one to transmit my name, and to be the stay and support of my old age. Thou hast everything in thy hidden treasury, bestow upon me a living and thriving son, so that my memory be kept up, and this kingdom be preserved from extinction." In this hope the king reached his fortieth year. One day, after he had finished his prayers, and was telling his beads in the *Shish Mahal*, ‡ he chanced to look in the direction of one of the mirrors, and perceived a white hair in his moustache, which glittered like a silver wire. At the sight of the hair the king's eyes filled with tears; he heaved a deep sigh, and then said to himself, "Alas! thou hast wasted thy years to no purpose and for earthly advantages thou hast turned the world topsy-turvy. And all the countties thou hast brought under thy sway, of what good are they to thee? Some other dynasty will, in the end, squander away all these treasures. Doath has already sent thee a messenger §; if thou livest a few days more, the strength of the body will decrease. Hence, it is clear from this circumstance that it is not in my destiny to have heir to my royal umbrella and my throne. I must one day die and leave everything behind me; so it is better for me that I should quit it now and devote the remainder of my life to the worship and contemplation of my Creator." Having formed this resolution in his mind, he descended to the lower part of his graden, || dismissed his courtiers

* All good Musalmans are expected to pray five times during the twenty-four hours.

† That is, *Thou hast given me no son*. The Mahomedans call male children as the *light of their house*.

‡ The *Shish Mahal* (or the mirror saloon) is an apartment in every Oriental palace, the walls of which are generally inlaid with small mirrors, having richly gilded borders.

§ The messenger is, of course, no other than the hair in his majesty's moustache.

|| The word used is *Páin-i-bágh*. Asiatic gardens have generally attached to them a *Páin-i-bágh* to which the Orientals descend when they w to be on a more familiar footing with their courtiers.

and issued an order to the effect that no one should approach him in future, but that all should attend the Public Hall of Audience,* and continue to efficiently perform their duties. After this the king adjourned to a private apartment, spread the carpet of prayer,† and engaged himself in prayer and meditation : he did nothing but weep and sigh. In this manner, the king Azad Bakht passed many days ; in the evening he broke his fast with a date and three mouthfuls of water ; and remained all day and night lying on the carpet of prayer. These facts became public, and gradually the news spread throughout the empire, that the king had withdrawn his hand from public affairs, and become a recluse. In every direction the enemies and the rebels lifted up their heads, and transgressed the bounds of obedience ; whoever wished encroached upon the kingdom, and made preparations for a revolt ; wherever there were governors, their authority was set at naught, and complaints of maladministration reached the court from every province. All the courtiers assembled, and began to consult and confer.

At last it was resolved that as the Prime Minister was a man of wisdom and intelligence and the confident and trustworthy servant of the king, and as he was superior to them all in point of rank, they should go to him and hear what he thought proper in connection with the affair. All the chiefs and nobles went to the minister and said, " Such is the state of the king, and such the condition of the empire that if more delay takes place, the kingdom, which has been obtained with such trouble, will be lost for nothing, and will not be easily recovered." The minister was an old, faithful servant, and wise ; he was called Khiradmand, a name which fully denoted his qualities. ‡ He answered, " Though the king has forbidden us to come into his presence, yet do you go ; I will go, too ; may it please God that the king be inclined to summon us into his presence." Having said this the minister brought them all along with him to the Public Hall of Audience and leaving them there, he repaired to the *Diwan-i-Khas* §

* 'Diwan-i-Am' or the Public Hall of Audience, is a magnificent hall in all oriental palaces, where the Asiatic sovereigns hold a more promiscuous Court than in the *Diwan-i-Khas* or the Private Hall of Audience. Those of Delhi and Agra were the grandest of their kind in Asia.

† In Asia the *musalah* is generally a small carpet, but in India it is often a small, beautiful mat. It is hardly necessary to mention that the Mahomedans generally pray with their faces towards Mecca, the substitute for the original point—Jerusalem.

‡ *Khiradmand* means wise.

§ A *Diwan-i-Khas* (Privy Council Chambers) is a grand saloon where the king's privy councillors or distinguished officers of State are admitted to an audience. Those of Delhi and Agra were at a time simply unsurpassed for their grandeur and beauty.

and sent word by the eunuch* to his majesty, saying, "This old slave is waiting, and has not seen for many days the world-illuminating countenance of the king ; he is in hopes that, after one look, he may kiss the royal feet, and be at his ease in mind." The king heard this request of his minister and, inasmuch as he knew his length of service, his zeal, his talents, and his devotion to his master, and had often acted upon his advice, after a pause, he desired *Khiradmand* to be called in. The permission having been at last granted, the minister appeared in the royal presence, made his obeisance, and stood with his arms folded across.† He observed the king's strange and altered appearance ; from excessive weeping and emaciation his eyes had sunk in their sockets, and his face was pale. *Khiradmand* could control himself no longer, but involuntarily rushed forward and threw himself at the king's feet. His majesty lifted up the minister's head with his hands and said, "Thou hast at last seen me, art thou now satisfied ; now withdraw, and do not disturb me in future ; do thou govern the kingdom." On hearing these words *Khiradmand* gave a groan and burst into a flood of tears. "This slave," said he, "by your royal favour and welfare is ever in possession of a kingdom ; but this sudden seclusion and retirement of your majesty has spread ruin over the empire, and the end of this will not be happy. What strange fancy has taken possession of your royal mind ! If your majesty will deign to take the hereditary slave into your confidence, it will be for the best, for in that case I can unfold to your majesty what occurs to my imperfect judgment regarding what is causing you so much anxiety. If you have bestowed honours on your slaves, it is for the reason, that in emergencies like these your majesty may enjoy yourself at ease and your slaves manage the affairs of State ; for if your exalted mind is to bear all this trouble, on what day will your slaves be of service to you ?" The king answered, "Thou sayest the truth, but the sorrow, which preys upon my mind is past cure. Listen, O *Khiradmand*, my whole life has been past in this vexatious career of conquest, and I am now arrived at this age ; there is only death before me ; nay, I have even received a message from Him, for my hair has turned gray. There is a saying to the effect, 'We have slept all night, and shall we not awake in the morning ?' I have not had a son yet that

* As the oriental princes generally pass the majorportion of their time in the *harem*, eunuchs are naturally the carriers of messages, &c. .

† The posture of respect before Asiatic princes. The man, who is ushered into the royal presence, should stand, rooted to the spot like a stone, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and the arms crossed over the breast.

I may be easy in mind ; for this reason my heart is filled with sorrow, and I have wholly renounce every thing. Whoever likes, may take the kingdom, and my wealth. I have nothing to do with them. Indeed, I intend some day or other to abandon everything, seek the mountains and woods, and not show my face to any one. In this way, I will pass the remaining few days of my life. If some spot pleases my fancy, I shall squat down thereon, and employ myself in the contemplation and adoration of my God, for perchance by doing this my future state may be happy. This world I have seen well, and found no felicity in it." Having uttered these words, the king heaved a deep sigh, and became silent.

Khiradmand had been the Prime Minister of his majesty's father, when the king was heir-apparent, he had loved him ; moreover, he was wise and prudent ; he thus spoke to *Azad Bakht*, "It is ever sinful to despair of God's mercy ; He who has brought into being eighteen thousand worlds* by one fiat—what difficulty is there for Him to give you children ? Sovereign of the world, drive away these fanciful notions from your mind, otherwise your majesty's subjects will be thrown into utter confusion, and the empire, built up by your royal ancestors and by yourself with endless trouble, will be lost in the twinkling of an eye, and from the want of care and vigilance the whole country will be ruined ; Heaven forbid that evil fame be your lot ! Moreover, you will be accountable to God for your actions on the day of judgment. When He says, 'Having made thee a king, I consigned my creatures to thy care, but thou, having no faith in my mercy, lettest them be harassed and distracted by neglecting thy duty,' what answer will you make ? Then even your devotion and prayers will be of no service to you, for the heart of man is the temple of God, and kings will have only to answer for the justice of their conduct. Excuse your slave's impertinence, but to leave home and wander from forest to forest, is the occupation of hermits and mendicants, † and not of kings. You ought to do the duties which belong to your high station ; the contemplation and adoration of God is not limited to mountains or forests ; your majesty has, no doubt, heard this couplet : 'God is near thee, but thou seekest Him in the solitudes of the woods ; the child is in thy arms, but thou lookest for it in the city' ‡ If your majesty will

* The word *alam* may be translated as *world* or *living beings*. The Muhammadans put down the number of animal species at 18,000.

† Literally, *saqirs* and *jogis*.

‡ Literally, there is a proclamation of having been lost in the city.

look at the whole question impartially, and act up to this slave's counsel, you will be following the wisest course in keeping God in mind every moment and offering up your prayers to Him. No body has yet returned repulsed and disappointed from His threshold. In the day-time, regulate the affairs of State, and dispense justice to the poor and distressed ; then the creatures of God will repose in peace and comfort under the shadow of your wealth and prosperity. Pray at night, and, after invoking blessings on the pure soul of the Prophet, seek assistance from recluse *Durweshes* and holy men, who are resigned to the will of God, and wholly above the influence of worldly things : bestow daily food on orphans, prisoners, men and women with large families, and helpless widows. From the blessings of these good works and benevolent motives and intentions, if it please God, there is a strong hope that the wishes and desires of your heart will all be realized, and the object, for which the royal mind is afflicted, will also be accomplished, and your majesty will be happy. Depend on the mercy of God, for He can do in a moment what he likes." At last by the force of such representations and admonitions on the part of the minister, *Khiradmand*, *Azad Bakht's* heart took courage, and he said, " Well, what thou advisest, we shall do that too ; what the Lord wishes, the same shall come to pass."*

When the king's mind was comforted, he enquired what the other nobles and ministers were doing, and how they were. The minister answered, " All the officers of State † are praying for the life and prosperity of your majesty, and, through grief at your situation, they are all dejected and distressed. Show your royal countenance to them that they may be easy in their minds ; they are even at this moment waiting in the Public Hall of Audience." On hearing these words, the king said, " God willing, I shall hold a court to-morrow ; tell them all to be present, each at his post." *Khiradmand* greatly rejoiced when he heard this promise, and raising his hands blessed the king, saying, " As long as this earth and heaven exist, so long may your majesty's crown and throne endure." When, taking leave of his master, he withdrew, his heart filled with joy and he imparted the pleasing news to the nobles. These went back to their homes, smiling and happy. There were rejoicings in

* The last clause may be rendered thus also : 'And leave the rest to God' or 'God's will be done.'

† Literally pillars of State.

the city, and the subjects became boundless in their transports at the idea that his majesty would hold a general court the next day. In the morning all the servants of State (*literally, slaves*), high and low, and all the ministers,* great and small, came to the court, and stood each according to his particular station and degree, and waited with anxiety to behold the royal countenance.† When three hours ‡ of the day had gone by, all of a sudden the curtain drew up, and the king, having come out, took his seat on the throne. Sounds of singing and music struck up in the *Naubat Khâna* § and all present offered *nazars* || of congratulation, and made their obeisance in the Hall of Audience. Each was honoured and rewarded according to his station and degree, and joy and peace reigned in all hearts. When six hours had elapsed (*i.e., at mid-day*) his majesty arose and adjourned to the interior of the palace; and, after enjoying the royal repast, retired to rest. From that day, the king made it a rule to hold his court every morning, and pass the afternoons in study or devotion and contemplation, and, after expressing penitence and asking forgiveness from God, to pray for the accomplishment of the object dear to his heart. One day, the king saw it written in a book that if any one is so oppressed with grief and care, that no human contrivance can relieve him, he should commit his sorrows to Providence, visit the tombs of the departed, and invoke God's blessings on them through the mediation of the Prophet; and regarding himself as *nothing*, keep his heart free from the thoughtlessness of the world; weep, deriving warning from the fate of others, and contemplate with awe the power of God, saying to himself, 'Prior to me what mighty kings, possessors of empires and wealth, have been born on earth; but the sky, involving them all in its revolving circle, has blended them with the dust.' The saying is, "That on beholding the grinding hand-mill moving, *Kabira* ¶ burst into tears, exclaiming 'Alas! nothing has as yet survived the pressure of two mill-stones.'

* Literally, *pillars of State*.

† The word *jalwah* means *splendour* or *lustre*, here it may be rendered as *countenance* or *appearance*.

‡ The word used is *pahar*, which is equal to three hours, for there are eight *pahars* in one day and night.

§ The *Naubat Khâna*, or the royal orchestra, is generally a spacious room over the outer gate of the palace for martial music.

|| *Nazars* are gifts offered to superiors (*kings, governors, masters, etc.*) on festive occasions, public or private. They are generally offered in gold and silver.

¶ A celebrated *saqîr* of upper *Hindustan*, and the founder of a theistic sect. His teachings, somewhat iconoclastic in their characters, are for the most part a protest against the degraded form of *Brahmanism*. In the line quoted he compares the earth and heaven to two mill-stones which grind living beings to death.

"Now if you look for these great men, you won't find any trace of them, except a heep of dust. One and all of them, leaving their wealth and possessions, their homes and offspring, their friends and acquaintances, their servants and dependents, their horses and elephants, are lying alone! All these things have been of no use to them; indeed, no one can tell now even their names or who they were, and their condition within the grave is unknown; nobody can say if they have been eaten up by worms, insects, ants or snakes, or what else has happened to them, or how they fared with God. After reflecting on these things in his mind, he should consider the whole world as an absolute farce; then the flower of his heart will constantly bloom, and it will not fade under any circumstances." When the king read this admonition in the book, he recalled to his mind the advice of his minister, *Khiradmand*, and he found that they both agreed. He conceived an intense longing to follow this advice. "But to mount on horse-back," said his majesty to himself, "and take a multitude of people, courtiers and dependents, with me, and go after the fashion of kings will not be proper and advisable. The best thing for me to do is, that, changing my dress, I should go at night and alone, to visit the graves of the departed, or some recluse saint and remain awake all night; perhaps through the mediation and intercession of these godly men, the desires of this world, as well as salvation in the next may be secured."

Having formed this resolution in his mind, the king one night dressed himself in coarse and soiled garments, and taking some money with him, he quietly sallied forth from the palace, and wended his way over the plain; proceeding onward he reached a graveyard, and was repeating his prayers with a sincere heart. At that time a furious wind was blowing: it might be called a regular hurricane. All of a sudden, the king observed a flame at a distance, which shone like the morning star. He reflected, within himself, "In this hurricane and gloom, the light cannot shine without the assistance of some contrivance or it may be a *talisman*; for if nitre and sulphur be sprinkled in the lamp, round the wick, then let the wind blow even so strong, it will not be able to put out the flame; or may it not be the lamp of some holy man which burns? But be it what it may, I must go and examine it; perhaps, by the light of this lamp, the lamp of my house may be lighted * and the desire of my heart be accomplished."

* That is, *I may yet have a son and heir.*

Having resolved this in his mind, the king bent his steps in that direction. When he drew near, he espied four erratic mendicants, with *kafnis** on their bodies, and their heads resting on their knees; they sat in the profound silence, and in a state of complete and unconscious abstraction. Their condition was something like that of a wayfarer, who, separated from the land of his birth and his community, friendless and alone, and weighed down with sorrow and grief, is desponding, and at a loss. After the fashion of such a traveller, sat the four *faqirs*, † like statues, and a lamp placed on a stone gave a brilliant light; the wind touched it not as if the sky itself were its shade, ‡ so that it burnt without danger of being blown out.

On seeing this, Azad Bakht was convinced that his desires should undoubtedly be realized through the blessing of the footsteps of the holy men he saw squatted down before him, and that the withered tree of his hopes should revive by their looks and bear fruit. "Go into their company," said he to himself, "and tell thy story, and join their society, perhaps their hearts may be moved with pity towards thee, and they may put up in thy behalf such a prayer as may be accepted by the Omnipotent." Having formed this resolution, he was about to step forward, when his judgment whispered into his ear, "O fool, don't act hastily; look a little before thee; what dost thou know who these people are, whence they have come, and whither they are going? How canst thou tell but they may be *devs* § or *ghols* || of the wilderness who, assuming human shape, are sitting together? To be hasty, and to go among them, and disturb them is improper in every way. For the present, conceal thyself in a corner, and make thyself acquainted with the story of the *Durwishes*." At last the king carried out his plan, and he hid himself in a corner so quietly, that no one heard the sound of his approach; he directed his attention towards them to listen to what they were saying amongst themselves. By chance one of the mendicants gave a sneeze, and said, "God be praised;" the other three *aklandars*, ¶ awakened by the

* A kind of short shirt without sleeves worn by *faqirs*. The colour is generally brick-dust.

† Mendicants, who are generally fanatics and enthusiasts, and often rank hypocrites. The Asiatics treat them with the highest respect thinking they can prevail upon Heaven to do whatever they desire.

‡ *Fanus* is a shade to keep the wind from the candle.

§ A *der* is a malignant spirit, the same as the Arabian *jinn*. In Sanskrit the word means *god*, a *sage*, etc.

|| *Ghol*, an imaginary demon of different shapes and colours, supposed to devour men and animals.

¶ *Aklandar* is a kind of monk, who deserts the world, wife, friends, etc. and travels about with shaven head and beard.

noise he made, snuffed the candle ; the flame was burning brightly, and each of them squatted on his mattress, lighted his *hookah* * and began to smoke. One of the *azads* † said, “ O friends in mutual pain, and fellow-wanderers over the world ! we four persons, by the revolutions of the sky, and the changes of day and night, with dust over our heads, have wandered for long periods from door to door. Heaven be praised that by the help of our good fortune, and the assistance of our destiny, we have to-day met each other on this spot. Of the morrow, we know nothing, nor what fate has in store for us, we may remain together, or we may be totally separated ; the night is an immense mountain‡ and to go to sleep so early is not commendable ; it is far better that we relate, each for himself, the events which have passed over our heads in this world,—without mixing a particle of untruth with our narratives : in this way the night will pass away in no time, § and when a part of it remains, let us retire to rest.” They all replied, “ Guide, we agree to all thou commandest, first give us thine own history, and relate what thou hast seen ; then shall we be benefited.”

* *Hookah* was nowhere to be found in Europe and Asia in the time of *Amir Khusro*. *Mir Umman* has introduced it in the translation to make the story *more interesting*.

† A kind of *saqir* who shaves his beard, eye-lashes, and eye brows, and vows chastity.

‡ That is, hangs heavy upon our hands ; is a great load.

§ Literally, in words.

ADVENTURES OF THE FIRST DURWES"

The first Durwesh, sitting at his ease, began to narrate the events of his travels, saying, "Beloved of God, turn towards me and hear this helpless one's history

1. Hear these adventures of mine with attentive ears ; the sky has raised and depressed me—hear all about it.
2. The hardships which I have had to encounter I shall describe hear them from beginning to end.

"O my friends, the place of my birth and the country of my forefathers is the land of Yamen (Arabia Felix) : the father of this wretched one was *malik-ul-tajjar*,* a great merchant named Khwaja Ahmed. At the time of which I speak, no banker or merchant was equal to him in wealth. In most cities he had established factories and appointed agents, for the purchase and sale of goods of every description ; and in his warehouses were *lakhs* † of rupees (in hard cash) and merchandise of different countries. He had two children born to him ; ‡ one was this *faqir*, who, dressed in *kafni* § and *saili*, is now in your presence, and speaking to you holy guides ; the other was a sister whom my father, during his lifetime, had married to a merchant's son of some other city ; she lived in the family of her father-in-law. In short, what limits can be set to the fondness of a father, who had an only son and was so enormously rich ? This wanderer was brought up with great tenderness under the shadow (care) of his father and mother. I began to learn reading and writing, the science and practice of a soldier's profession, as well as the art of commerce and the keeping of accounts. Fourteen years of my life passed away in extreme delight and perfect freedom from care ; no worldly anxiety ever entered my heart. All at once, in one and the same year, both of my parents died by the decree of Heaven.

"Such was my grief at the misfortune which had befallen me, that I cannot describe its anguish and intensity. All of a sudden I was reduced to the state of an orphan. No elder of the family remained to watch over me. For this unexpected calamity, I wept day and night ; food and drink were utterly disregarded. In this miserable condition I passed forty days. On the fortieth

* Literally, the prince of merchants, *Tajjar* is the plural of *tajár*, a merchant, and *malik* means a king.

† A *lakh* is a hundred thousand.

‡ Literally, born in his house.

§ *Kafni* is a dress worn by *faqirs*, and *saili* a necklace of threads worn by the members of the same fraternity.

day* after the death of my parents, my relations and strangers of every rank and station assembled to perform the rites of mourning. When the prayer for the benefit of the souls of the departed † had been read, they tied on this *faqir's* head the turban of his father, ‡ and addressed these words of counsel and advice to me : ‘In this world, the parent of all have died sooner or later, and you must yourself one day be gathered to your forefathers ; therefore have recourse to patience, and look after your house (establishment) ; you are now become its lord and master in the room of your father ; exercise great vigilance in your affairs and transactions.’ After administering consolation to me in this sympathetic and friendly manner, they took their leave. All the agents, factors, and employés of my late father came and waited upon me ; they offered their *nazars* and said, ‘May it please you worship to behold with your own blessed eyes the cash in the coffers and the merchandise in the warehouses.’ When all of a sudden my sight fell on this immense heap of wealth, I felt as if ushered into a new world and my ideas underwent a complete change. I issued orders for the fitting up of the *diwankhána* § ; the *farrashes* || spread the carpets, and hung up *pardas*, ¶ and a set of magnificent *chicks*. ** I took well-made and handsome servants into my service and caused them to be dressed in rich clothes at my own expense. This *faqir* had no sooner taken his seat on the *masnad* †† of his father ‡‡ than he was surrounded by tops, coxcombs, parasites and sycophants, who became his counsellors and advisers. I began to have them day and night near my person. They amused me with the gossip of every place and everly ing tittle-tattle : and they constantly dinned into

* The fortieth day is an important period in Mahomedan rites on occasions of both joy and sorrow. To dignify the number *forty* still more the sick and wounded are supposed by Oriental romance writers to recover and perform the bath of cure on the fortieth day.

† *Fateh* is the first chapter of the *Qurán* which is repeated when praying for the souls of the dead ; the word has come to mean a short prayer or benediction in general.

‡ The general mode of investiture in Hindustan of offices, places, &c.

§ That part of a house where male company are received.

|| The *farrashes* are servants whose business is to spread carpets, &c.

¶ Quilted screens which hang before doors, &c.

** Hanging screens made of fine bamboo slips. They are often beautifully coloured, and are hung up before doors and windows for the purpose of keeping out insects, as well as to prevent persons inside from being seen by those outside. The chicks admit both light and air from without.

†† A seat or throne.

†‡ Literally, reposed in the vacant seat of my father.

my ears these words : ' In the prime of life in which you are, you ought to get distilled wine, perfumed with the scent of the *kaithi*, * or with that of the rose, and, having sent for lovely mistresses ; drink the same with them, and enjoy yourself in the most voluptuous manner possible.'

" In short, the evil genius of man is man ; my disposition became changed by perpetually listening to their pernicious advice. Wine-drinking, gaming and dancing took up the whole of my time. At last matters came to such a pitch that, becoming utterly forgetful of my commercial concerns, I plunged headlong into debauchery, and spent my time in gambling. My servants and summer companions, when they perceived my careless habits, took away whatever they could lay their hands on ; indeed, one might say, they entered on a career of systematic plunder. No account was kept of the money that was being thus lavishly spent ; no one could tell whence it came and where it went. No mercy is ever shown to the property of others. Had I even possessed the treasures of *Korah*, they would not have sufficed to stand this vast expense and this extraordinary waste. In a few years, I had run through my fortune, and suddenly found myself reduced to the miserable state of having a bare skull cap for my head a rag about my waist. Those friends who used to share my hospitality and who so often swore to shed their blood in my service, vanished ; and if I ever chanced to meet them in the streets, they would avert their faces from me ; even my servants deserted me and went away. No one remained to enquire after my state, and to sympathise with me in my poverty.

" Grief and regret were the only companions that were left to me. I had not a quarter of a pice worth food to grind between my jaws, and to give a relish to the water that I drank. I endured two or three severe fasts, but could no longer bear the tortures of hunger. At last, from dire necessity, covering my face with the mark of impudence, I made up my mind to go to my sister ; but I felt quite ashamed of myself, when I reflected that, since the demise of my father, I had kept up no friendly intercourse with my sister, or even written a line to her ; although she had sent me two or three affectionate letters of condolence, I had not condescended to make any reply—in my intoxicated moment of prosperity. Shame, proceeding from my rude behaviour to her, made me unwilling to repair to my sister ; but except her house I had no other to which I could apply for assistance. In the best way I could, on

* A highly odorous flower.

foot, wholly destitute of money, and after a long wearisome journey, I reached the city where my sister lived, and went up to her house. She on seeing my reduced, miserable state, embraced me, and wept bitterly. She distributed the customary gifts to the poor for my safe arrival, and said to me, 'Though my heart is overjoyed at this meeting, yet, brother, in what a sad plight do I find you !' I could make no answer, but, suppressing my tears, remained silent. My sister ordered a fine suit of clothes for me, and without any further delay sent me to a bath ; after bathing, I put on these clothes.

" She appointed an elegant room, near her own, for me to live in. I had in the morning *sharbat*, * orgeat and sweetmeats of various kinds for my breakfast ; at noon, fresh and dried fruits for my luncheon, and at dinner and supper she treated me to *pulaos*, *kababs*,† *prathás* and bread remarkable for its superb flavour and delicious cookery. She would see me eat all these before she would go to her own apartments. She looked to my wants in every possible way, and comforted my harassed mind. When, after the hardships and misfortunes I had suffered I experienced this comfort and ease, I offered my grateful thanks to Heaven for its mercies. One day, my sister who treated me with all the tenderness of a mother, said to me, ' O brother ! thou art the light of my eyes, and the memorial of our dead parents. This arrival has satisfied the longing of my heart, and whenever I see thee, my joy is unbounded ; thou hast made me completely happy ; but God has created men to earn their living by the sweat of their brow, and they ought not to sit idle at home. If a man becomes idle and sits inactive and inert at home, the people of the world taunt him and cast reflections on him : in particular, the inhabitants of this city, both high and low, on thy living with me and doing nothing, will say that having squandered his father's vast wealth and wasted his immense property, he now subsists on the scraps from his brother-in-law's table. This apparent want of pride will cause us to be held up to ridicule, and will be a matter of shame to the memory of our parents or else I would keep thee near my heart, and, making shoes of my skin, would give thee to wear them. Now my advice to thee is that thou shouldst make up thy mind to undertake a journey ; if it please God, the times will change, and in place of thy present difficulties and want, peace and prosperity will yet brighten the future years of thy life.'

* Coo , sweet and scented water.

† Roasted meat.

When I heard these words, I felt ashamed of myself, and approving her advice, replied, 'Very well, you are now a mother to me, and I will gladly do whatever you desire.' Having learnt what my intentions were, she went to her apartments and brought out, by the help of her servants and slaves, fifty bags of gold, and laying them before me said, 'A caravan of merchants is on the point of starting for Damascus; go and buy with this money some articles of merchandise, and place them under the care of a merchant of established probity and take a formal receipt for them from him; do thou also set out for Damascus, and when thou hast reached there in safety, receive the amount realized from the sale of thy goods together with the profit which may accrue therefrom, from the merchant, or sell them thyself, if doing that may be more advantageous.' I took the money, and repaired to the *Great Bazar*,* and having purchased such articles of merchandise as would sell at great profit at Damascus, I put them in charge of a wealthy merchant, and took a satisfactory receipt from him. The merchant embarked (with the goods) on board a ship and proceeded by sea, and I, the *faqir*, made preparations to go by land. When I took leave of my sister, she made me a present of a rich dress and a magnificent horse with jewelled harness; and having filled a leather bag with sweetmeats and cakes, she hung it by the pommel of my saddle, and caused a flask of water to be suspended to the crupper. She tied a sacred coin to my arm,† and having marked my forehead with curdled milk ‡ and suppressing her tears, she said, 'Proceed! I put thee under the protection of heaven; thou shovest thy back in going, show me thy face soon equally hale and hearty.' I repeated a prayer for her welfare and said, 'May God be thy protector also, I accept thy blessing.' Coming out thence I mounted my horse and committing myself to the care and protection of the Almighty I set off; and making two stages in one, I soon found myself in the vicinity of Damascus. In short, when I reached the gate of the city, a considerable part of the night had passed away. The gate-keepers and the guards had shut the gate. I made many entreaties, saying, 'I am a traveller, coming from a distant place at a great rate; if you would kindly open the gate, I would go into the city and obtain some refreshments for myself and my horse.' They replied in a rough and surly tone from within, 'There is no order to open the gate at this early hour;

* The strand of Asiatic cities.

† A sacred coin dedicated to *Imam Zamin*, the protecting *Imam*. It is tied on a person's arm when undertaking a journey to avert evil.

‡ A ceremony borrowed from the Hindoos.

why have you come, when the night is so far advanced ?' When I heard this curt answer to my request, I alighted from my horse under the city-rampart and, spreading my housing on the ground, I sat down on it ; but to prevent myself from going to sleep, I now and then rose up, and commenced walking forwards and backwards. When half the night had passed away, and half was yet to pass, a dead silence prevailed all around ; at this moment what did I see but that a chest was descending slowly from the top of the wall of the fort ? On beholding this strange sight, I was astonished, and said to myself, 'What talisman is this ? Perhaps God, moved by my poverty and my distraction, has sent me this from His hidden treasury.' When the chest reached the ground, I approached it tremblingly. I perceived that it was made of wood. Influenced by avarice, I opened it. A beautiful, lovely female, at the sight of whom the senses would depart, wounded and waltering in her blood, with eyes closed, and in extreme agony, lay in the chest. Her lips moved slowly and painfully, and these words issued from her mouth, 'O faithless wretch ! O cruel tyrant ! is this the return I merited for my kindness and affection ? Oh ! inflict on me another wound, and finish thy savage work. I commit our conduct to God, to do us justice.' Having uttered these words, she, even in that state of insensibility, drew the end of her wrapper (*doppatta*) over her face : she did not deign to look at me.

"I, the beggar, seeing her in that state, and, hearing her exclamations, was stupefied. I said to myself, 'What shameless tyrant could wound such a lovely female ? What demon possessed his heart, and how could he lay his hand on a creature so superbly beautiful ? She still loves her murderer, for she is thinking of him even in this state of agony.' While I was muttering these words to myself, my voice reached her ears. At once, removing the cloth from her face, she looked at me. When her looks met mine, a fainting fit began to come upon me, and my heart beat with difficulty. With an effort I supported myself, and, taking courage, I asked her, 'Tell me truly who you are, and what sad occurrence is this I see ; explain it to me, so that my mind may be comforted.' On hearing these words, though she had scarce strength to speak, she slowly said, 'God be praised ! how on earth can I speak, when, through wounds, my condition is so weak ? I am the guest of a few moments only ; when my soul leaves my body, then, for the sake of God, do thou act generously by me, and bury my unfortunate person somewhere in this very chest. I shall then be freed from the tongue of the bad and the good alike, and thou shalt obtain a reward in the next world.' Having said this much, she became silent.

It being night, I could not do anything to relieve her. Lifting up the chest, I brought it near me and began to impatiently wait the approach of morning (literally, began to count the hours of the remaining night) I made up my mind, as soon as the day should break, to go into the city and procure for her medical assistance to the best of my power. The short remaining night appeared an age to me, and I felt extremely restless. Atlast, after suffering much uneasiness, the morning drew near, the cock crew, and the voices of men began to reach me. Having said my morning prayers, I fastened the chest to my portmanteau and, just as the gate opened, I entered the city. Of every person and shopkeeper I came across, I enquired where I could rent a house. After a great deal of search, I rented one--a well-shaped, new and comfortable building, and went and took up my quarters in it. The first thing I did, was to take that lovely creature out of the chest and, having made a soft bed on flocks of cotton, laid her thereon in a corner, and leaving her in charge of a trusty man, I issued forth in search of a surgeon. I asked of every person I met who was the most skilful surgeon in the city, and where he lived. A man said, 'There is here a barber who is unique in the practice of surgery and in the science of physic, and in this business quite perfect. If you take a dead man to him, he will, by the grace of God, use such means as will restore him to life. He lives in this quarter of the town, and his name is Isa * On hearing this welcome intelligence, I eagerly set out in search of him. After a great deal of search, I found his abode, by the help of the directions I had received. I saw a man, with a white beard, sitting under the portico of his door, and several men, sitting beside him, were grinding something for the purpose of preparing an ointment. With a view to flatter him, I made him a respectful bow, and said, 'Having heard your name and good qualities, I have come to you. The fact is that I set out from my country for the purpose of trading ; and I took my wife with me from the great love I had for her. When I was only a short distance from the city, the evening came on ; I did not think it advisable to travel at night in a foreign land, and consequently alighted under a tree in the plain. During the last watch of the night the robbers came and they robbed me of all the money and all the golds they found with me. Indeed, they were so cruel as to wound my wife, through avidity for her jewels. Being unaided and alone, I could make no resistance, and passed the remainder of the night somehow or other. As soon

* The name of Christ among the orientalists.

as morning dawned I came into this city, and rented a house. Having left her there, I have come running all this way to solicit your assistance. God has given you great skill in your profession, have pity on this traveller, honour his humble dwelling by your presence and see her. If you can save her life, great will be your renown, and I will serve you all my life. The surgeon Isa was very kind-hearted and devout. Being moved by my words of humility, he accompanied me to my dwelling. He had scarcely seen the wounds, when he gave me hopes, saying, 'By the blessing of God, this lady's wounds will be healed in forty days, and at the expiration of that period I guarantee her taking the bath of recovery.'

"In short, that good man washed all the wounds with the decoction of *neem** and cleansed them ; those that required stitching up he stitched ; on others, having taken out a box from his pocket, he laid lint and plasters, and, having put flocks of cotton on them, he bandaged them up. After this, he said in a kindly tone, 'I shall call twice a day ; do thou remain careful ; let her not move so that the stiches may give away ; give her chicken-broth for food, in small quantities at a time, and make her drink spirits of *Baidmuskt*† with rose-water, that her strength may be kept up.' After giving these directions, he asked leave to go. I thanked him in a tone of humility and, with joined hands, said, 'By the hopes you have given me, my life too has been preserved ; else I saw nothing but death before me (from the wounds she has received). May God preserve and protect you.' Having given him *attar*‡ and betel-leaf, I dismissed him. Night and day I attended on that fairy with the utmost solicitude ; I made rest unlawful on me, and I daily prayed to the mercy of Heaven (literally, at the court of Heaven) for her recovery.

"As good luck would have it, the merchant, to whom I had entrusted my goods, arrived at this critical period, and made over to me the merchandise he had charge of for me. I disposed of it as well as I could, and began to spend the proceeds in medicines and remedies for the wounded lady.

* The leaves of this tree are bitter. They are of great service reducing inflammations and in cleansing wounds.

† A sort of odiferous *bed* or willow, which grows in Kashmir. It is a tonic, and exhilarating in its effects.

‡ Essence of any flower, generally of roses. The Hinoos and Mahomedans of India present scent and betel (a kind of aromatic leaf) to their visitors when the latter are about to depart.

" The benevolent surgeon was regular in his attendance. In a short time, all the wounds filled up and began to heal. A few days after, she took the bath of recovery. The pleasure which I felt at her cure, was extraordinary and unique of its kind. *A robe of honour,** a purse of gold *mohars* I placed before the surgeon *Isa*, and having spread some splendid carpets and laid a *masnad*,† I seated that fairy thereon. I gave away large sums of money in charity to the poor and needy.

" On this happy day I felt as if I had acquired the sovereignty of all the *seven climes* ‡ And now that that fairy had recovered from her wounds, such exquisite colour appeared in her complexion that her countenance began to shine like the sun, and glitter like the purest gold. One could not gaze on her without being dazzled. I devoted myself, with all my heart and soul, to her service ; and whatever she commanded me to do, I readily performed. In the pride of her beauty and in the conceit of her high station, if even she deigned to look at me, she would say, 'Take care if you value my good will and pleasure, don't hesitate to implicitly carry out my orders ; whatever I tell you to do, do it without raising the slightest objection to it ; don't interfere in anything that concerns me, otherwise you will repent of your presumption.' In spite of her haughty and imperious ways, it was evident from her behaviour that she was sensible of the value of the service I had rendered her. In all I did I consulted her wishes and carried out her orders with cheerful obedience (literally, with head and eyes). A considerable time passed away in this mystery and submission. Whatever she desired to have, I instantly procured, and brought to her. All the money I had from the sale of my goods, including capital and profit, as well as all that I had in kind, was gone. In an unknown land where I was a perfect stranger, who would trust me that by borrowing I could still go on defraying her expenses. At last the want of money, even for daily expenses, began to be felt, and I was greatly distressed on that account. Through anxiety, I grew thinner and thinner daily, and the colour of my face became sallow. But to whom could I disclose the agonized state of my heart ? The anger of a poor man affects him-

* The *khillat* is a robe of honour, generally a rich one, presented by superiors to inferiors.

† A sort of counterpane. It is made of silk or brocade which is spread on a carpet for the master of the house to sit on and receive company. The word also means a throne. The expression *masnad par batlna* means, to ascend the throne.

‡ The Mahomedans divide the world into *seven climes*.

self only.* One day that lovely creature having through the peneration of her own judgment, read my thought and said to me, ‘ Young man ! the services you have done me are engraved on my heart in indelible characters, as on stone ; but they cannot be requited at present ; should you need any thing for necessary expenses, don’t let yourself be anxious on that account ; but bring me paper, pen and ink.’ From the proud and haughty manner in which she spoke, I concluded that she must be a princess of some country. I immediately brought pen, ink and paper, and placed them before her. The lovely creature having penned a note, and put her signature to it, handed it over to me, saying, ‘ Near the fort there is *Tripolia* † and in the street adjoining it there is a large building ; the name of the owner of the house is *Sidi Bahar*. Repair to that place and deliver this note to him. I went in obedience to her commands, and by the help of the name and the address she had given me reached my destination (*i. e.*, reached the house I was in search of). I sent in word through the porter that I was the bearer of a note. The moment the message was delivered, a handsome young negro, wearing a beautiful turban, came out to me. His colour was, no doubt, dark but his face was full of animation and intelligence (literally, was filled with salt). He took the letter from my hand, said nothing, and put no questions, but forthwith went inside the house. In a short time he returned, accompanied by slaves, who had on their heads eleven sealed trays with brocade coverings thrown over them, and said, ‘ Follow the young man and deposit these trays in his house.’ Having saluted the young negro, I took my leave of him and brought the slaves to my house. I dismissed the men at the door, and having conveyed those trays in, I placed them just as they were before the fairy. On seeing them, she said, ‘ Take the eleven bags of gold contained in these trays, and use them to defray the necessary expenses. God is bountiful.’ Having taken the money I began to lay it out, as desired, in necessaries. Though the anxiety, caused by my pecuniary distresses, vanished, yet my mind was perplexed with doubts. ‘ O God,’ said I to myself, ‘ what a circumstance is this ! A stranger, who never beheld my face before, made over to me, without asking any questions whatever, at the mere sight of a bit of paper, such a heap of gold. I cannot apply to the fairy for an explanation of the mystery, for she has already warned me not to meddle with her affairs. I was dumb and speechless with fear.

* A Persian proverb, meaning that the anger of a poor man feeds on his own vitals.

† *Tripolia*—Three-arched gat

" Eight days after this occurrence, that beloved one said to me, ' The most high God has bestowed on man the robe of manhood which can neither be torn nor soiled ; and although old and tattered garments do not in any way affect his sterling virtues, yet, as far as appearance is concerned, he cannot command the confidence of the world, in consequence of his being so meanly habited. So take two bags of gold with thee, go to the shop of the merchant Yusaf in the market, where four different roads meet, and, having bought two rich suits of clothes and some costly jewels, bring them with thee.' I immediately mounted my horse and proceeded to his shop. On arriving there I saw a handsome youth dressed in saffron-coloured garments, and seated on a cushion. Such was his beauty that, crowds of people stood gazing at him in the street before his shop. I approached him with an ardent desire and, having bid him *Salam alaikam* (peace be to thee), sat down, and asked for the articles I wanted. My way of talking was not like that of the inhabitants of the city. The young merchant replied in a tone of affection. ' Whatever you require is all ready ; but first tell me, sir, from what country you come and what is the reason of your staying in this strange land ? If you will condescend to communicate to me the required information on this point, it would be an act of great kindness on your part.' I had no mind whatever to let him into the particulars of my history, and consequently, having made some story, and purchased the jewels and clothes and paid their price, I asked leave to depart. The young man was annoyed at this, and said, ' O Sir, if you wanted to be reserved, where was the necessity of your being so warm and affectionate in your greeting on your first approach ? Among men of good breeding a great weight is attached to amicable greetings and they give great claim. He spoke these words with so much taste and propriety that I could not help being highly pleased at them. I did not think it polite to be rude, and to leave him hastily and unceremoniously. Therefore I sat down again and said, ' I obey your commands with all my heart, and I am wholly at your disposal.' He was highly pleased with my compliance, and smilingly said ' If you honour my poor house with your presence to day, I shall, taking advantage of your company, invite a few pleasant friends and, after we have amused ourselves for some hours, we shall sit down to a meal and devote some moments to eating and drinking something.' I had never left the fairy alone since we first met and, thinking her lonely situation, made several excuses to the youthful merchant for declining his invitation, but he would listen

to none. At last, after exacting from me a promise to the effect that I should come back as soon as I had taken home the things I had purchased, and making me ratify it by an oath, he gave permission to depart. Leaving the shop, I took the jewels and dresses to the fairy and deposited them before her. She asked me the price of the jewels, and what had passed at the merchant's. I related to her all the particulars of the purchase, and of his insisting upon inviting me. Upon this she said, 'It is obligatory on every one to fulfil his promise and make good his word ; commit me to the care and protection of heaven and go to your engagement ; the law of the prophet of God requires that we should accept an invitation. I said, 'My heart does not wish that I should leave you alone and go, but your commands must be obeyed and I go, in obedience to them ; till I return my heart will be attached to this spot.' Having said these words, I went back to the jeweller's shop. Seated on a stool he was waiting for me. The moment he saw me, he said 'Come, good sir, you have kept me waiting a long time. He immediately rose, took me by the hand, and moved on. Going along, he conducted me to a garden, which was remarkably beautiful. In it reservoirs, canals and fountains were playing ; fruits of various kinds were in full bloom ; and the branches of trees were bending down with their weight ; birds of various kinds, perched upon the boughs, were warbling, and in every magnificent building splendid carpets were spread. There, on the edge of a canal, we sat down in an elegant summer house. A moment after he got up, and went away, but soon returned richly dressed. On seeing him, I exclaimed, 'God be praised ! may the evil eye be far off.* Hearing this he smiled and said, 'It is right that you, sir, should also change your dress.' To please him, I put on another suit, (which was more elegant than the one I wore). The young merchant had prepared a sumptuous feast for me, and provided all those articles of pleasure that could be desired. Having formed a warm friendship with me, he began to talk in a manner which was quite fascinating. Meanwhile, the cup-bearer, furnished with a flagon of wine and crystal cups, made his appearance and placed before us several kinds of relishes and delicious meats. The salt cellars were also placed in order. The wine-cup began to circulate lavishly, and when it had gone round three or four times four beardless lads, extremely beautiful and with flowing curls, entered the assembly, and began to sing

* A complimentary exclamation. It is addressed to persons remarkable for their beauty, wealth, etc.,

and play. The scene was so delightful, and so exquisite the harmony evolved, that had *Tansen** been there at the moment, he would have forgotten his strains, and *Baiju Baorat*, on hearing them, would have gone mad. In the midst of this enjoyment and hilarity, the eyes of the young merchant suddenly filled with tears, and in spite of his efforts to keep down his emotions, two or three drops coursed down his cheeks, and he said, 'We are now devoted friends and to conceal the secrets of our hearts from our friends is not allowable in any religion. I am going to communicate to you a secret in the confidence of friendship and without any ceremony. If you will give me your permission, I will send for my mistress, and gladden my heart with her presence in this assembly. In consequence of her being away, I cannot enjoy the pleasures which surround us.' He uttered these words in such a passionate tone, that although I had never seen the lady he spoke of, I became extremely desirous of having a sight of her. I therefore said 'Your happiness is dear to me; what can be better than what you propose? Don't delay sending for her; true it is, that nothing seems agreeable to us when our mistress is not by.' The young merchant made a sign towards the screen; immediately a woman, black as sin, a veritable hag, the sight of whom would kill a man before his appointed hour of death, came forth and took her seat near him. On seeing her, I was frightened, and said to myself, 'Is this witch the sweetheart of a young man so exquisitely beautiful? Was it she of whom he spoke in such rapturous terms, and for whose society he expressed such longing?' Having repeated *lahaul*† I became silent.

"For three whole days and nights the company kept enjoying the pleasures of wine and music. On the fourth day, intoxication and sleep overpowered us all. In spite of my best efforts to the contrary, I fell into a deep slumber—a slumber of utter self-forgetfulness. When the morning came, the youth awakened me and, having made me drink several cups of wine to drive off intoxication and headache, he said to his mistress, 'To give any further trouble to our guest by detaining him any longer, is contrary to good manners.' He took hold of both my

* A celebrated musician in the court of Akbar the Great

† A famous Indian minstrel. The reader should note that *Boolā* and *Baola* have the same meaning (mad). The play on the word *tan* should also be noticed.

‡ The full formula is *Lahaul wala quwat Illa billah*, which means: There is no power nor virtue but in God. The repeating of this formula is said to drive away evil spirits.

hands, and we stood up. I asked for leave to depart. With the greatest pleasure he gave me permission to return home. I then hastily put on my former clothes, and proceeded homewards. Having arrived in the presence of that fairy, I waited on her. It had never occurred before in my case to leave her alone and pass the night somewhere else. I was quite ashamed of myself for having been absent three days and nights, and I made her many apologies, relating to her at the same time, all the circumstances of the entertainment, and of his not allowing me to come home sooner. She was a wise woman, fully acquainted with the manners of society, and smilingly said, ‘What does it matter if you had to stay to oblige a friend. I readily pardon you, for how can you be blamed for what you did? When a person goes to the house of another, in response to an invitation, he comes back when it pleases the other to let him. But having enjoyed his entertainments for nothing, will you remain silent, or give him a treat in return? It seems to me right and proper that you go to the young merchant and, having brought him with you, give him a feast two-fold greater than his. Don’t let yourself be anxious regarding the materials for the entertainment; by the favour of God all the necessaries will be soon ready and the hospitable party will obtain splendour in a most excellent style.’ Thus commanded by her, I went to the jeweller, and said to him, ‘I obeyed your commands most cheerfully; now do you also, in consideration of our friendship, grant my request.’ He replied, ‘I will do your bidding with my heart and soul.’ Then I said, ‘If you will honour the house of your slave with your presence, it will be the essence of condescension.’ The youth made many excuses and evasions; but I would not give up the point until he consented. I conducted him to my house; but on the way I could not help making reflections. ‘If I had the means, I would give my guest such a reception to-day as would be extremely gratifying to him. Now that I am taking him with me, let us see what is the result.’ Absorbed in such anxious reflections, I reached my house. What did I see but that there was a great crowd and bustle at the door; the streets had been swept and watered, and men with silver maces* and club-bearers were in attendance. I was wonder-struck at what I beheld, but knowing it to be my own house, I stepped in. I saw that rich carpets befitting every room were spread here and there, and elegant cushions were laid out. Betel-holders, rose-water bottles, essence-holders

* The insignia of State among the nobles and chiefs of India.

spittoons, flower-vessels, and narcissus pots, were all arranged in proper order. In the recesses in the walls, oranges, large and small, sweet and sour limes and sweet-meats of various kinds and colours were placed. On one side, in variegated frames of *tale*, lights were displayed; and on the other, tall branches of lamps, resembling cypresses and lotuses, were lighted up. Throughout the hall and balconies, camphorated candles were placed in golden candlesticks, and jewelled shades were placed over them. Every attendant was standing at his own appointed post. In the kitchen large cooking pots were jingling. In the room, set aside for the cooling of water, the same preparations were going on : new water-pots were placed on silver stands, with filters attached, and covered with lids. Further on, spoons and brass cups, with platters and covers, were placed on a platform ; small leaden mugs with covers for the congelation of the ice were nicely arranged, and flagons were being vigorously moved in saltpetre. In short, every requisite, worthy of princes, was provided. Dancing girls, buffoons, dancing boys, musicians, and story-tellers, dressed in rich clothes, were in attendance, and singing in concert. I conducted the young man in and seated him on a cushion. I was all amazed and said to myself, ' O God ! how could such preparations have been made in so short a space of time ? I was staring around and walking about in every direction but could nowhere discover a trace of that fairy. In the course of my search, I entered the kitchen and I saw her there, with an upper garment on her neck, slippers on her feet, a small handkerchief thrown over her head, in plain and simple dress and without any jewels and ornaments.

Verse.

She, whom God has given beauty, has no need of ornaments :
Behold how lovely the moon appears without decorations

" She was busily engaged in Superintending the kitchens and was giving directions in respect of every eatable saying, ' Have a care that this dish may be delicious, and that as regards water, salt and smell, it may be faultless.' In consequence of this hard work, her rose-like body was covered all over with perspiration.

" I approached her with reverence, * and having extolled her good sense and the propriety of her conduct, I began to invoke blessings on her. On hearing my compli-

*Literally, I sacrificed myself on her.

ments, she frowned and said, ‘ Various things are done by men which it is not in the power of angels to perform ; what have I done that thou art so much astonished ? Enough ! I dislike talking too much. But pray, what manner is this that leaving your guest alone, thou shouldest keep wandering about here and there ? What will he think of such conduct on thy part ? Go back sharp to the company, entertain thy guest, and having sent for his mistress make her sit by him.’ I immediately returned to the young merchant and commenced lavishing every friendly attention on him. In the meantime, two slaves very handsome and holding in their hands flagons of wine and jewelled cups, entered and served us with liquor. Upon this, I said to the young merchant, ‘ I am, in every way, your sincere friend and servant ; it were well that your beautiful mistress, whom you so deeply love (*literally*, to whom your heart is so much attached) should honour me with her presence in this house ; it would be doing me a great favour ; and if you please, I will send a person to bring her here.’ On hearing these words of mine, he was delighted, and said, ‘ Very well, my friend, you have, by making this proposal, only anticipated the wish of my heart.’ I despatched a eunuch to bring her. When it was past midnight, that foul hag, mounted on an elegant sedan, arrived like an unexpected calamity.

“ To please my guest, I was compelled to advance and, having conducted her with great respect, placed her near the young man. At the sight of her, the youth was as much pleased as if he had obtained the most precious thing in the world. That witch also clung round the neck of that fairy-born youth. The sight was extremely ridiculous, and presented a striking resemblance to an eclipse coming over a *full moon*.* All the men, who were present in the assembly, put their forefingers in their teeth, through surprise, saying to themselves, ‘ Has some fiend come and possessed this youth ? ’ The gaze of all was fixed in that direction. Becoming forgetful of the amusements of the entertainment, they became one and ail, absorbed in the contemplation of this strange spectacle.

“ A man apart remarked, ‘ Friends, there is enmity between *Love* and *Reason*. That which appears as wholly impossible to reason, this cursed love will bring about and show. You must behold *Lailit* with the eyes of *Majnoon*.†

* Over the moon of the fourteenth night.

†Mistress of *Majnoon*. She was something far from beautiful,—indeed, she was a mass of ugliness and yet *Majnoon* was devotedly attached to her.

‡ Name of a celebrated lover, whose amours with *Laili* are the sub-

Everybody present exclaimed, ‘Verily, that is the fact.’

“ According to the orders of the fairy, I attended to the rites of hospitality ; and although the young man insisted upon my eating and drinking equally with himself, yet, through fear of that fairy, I carefully avoided giving myself up to eating and drinking, or the pleasures and amusements of the entertainment. I pleaded the duties of hospitality as my excuse, and did not join him in the good cheer. In this scene of festivity and enjoyment three days and nights passed away. On the fourth night, the youth, having called me with great cordiality said, ‘I too, shall take my leave now ; for your sake having left all my business, I have been with you for the last three days ; do you now sit with me for a moment and rejoice my heart.’ I reflected within myself that if I refused to comply with his request now, he would be annoyed. It was necessary to please my new friend and guest, and consequently made him the reply, ‘It will afford me pleasure to obey your commands knowing that a *command** is paramount to good manners.’ On hearing this the young man presented me a cup of wine, and I drank it off. After this, the cup began to circulate so briskly that in a short time all the guests in the assembly became dead drunk and stupefied ; I, too, became senseless.

“ When the day broke and the sun had risen to the height of two spears, † my eyes opened. I saw nothing of the preparations, the assembly or that fairy ; only the empty house remained. In a corner of the hall, however, I saw something lying wrapped up in a blanket. I unfolded it and saw the bodies of the young man and his black mistress, with their heads cut off. At the sight of this spectacle, my senses departed ; my reason was of no service to me in unravelling this mystery, nor could it tell me what had happened. Surprised and confounded I was staring in every direction, when the eunuch, whom I had seen in the preparations of the entertainment, appeared. The sight of the man somewhat comforted me and I asked him an explanation of the strange occurrence. He answered curtly, ‘What good will it do thee to investigate this matter that thou questionest me with respect to it ?’ I too, reflected in my mind that in what he said, he was in the right. So after pondering a while I said, ‘Well you need not tell it to me but let me know at least the place where that beloved one is to be found.’

* An Arabic proverb, meaning that although I ought to wait upon you as my guest, yet, having regard for your command, I should give up ceremony and join you in eating and drinking.

† A figurative expression, here equivalent to,—The sun had been two *gharis* above the horizon.

He replied, 'Certainly ; I will tell thee what I know ; but it passes my comprehension how a sensible man like thee, could, without the permission of her ladyship, and without fear of ceremony, indulge in a wine-drinking party after an acquaintance of only a few days (*literally*, two days). How do you explain this ?'

"I was extremely ashamed of my reprehensible conduct, and his reprobation was only too just. I could make no other reply than this, 'Indeed, I have been guilty of a fault ; please pardon me.' At last the eunuch, becoming gracious, indicated the place where that fairy's dwelling stood, and dismissed me ; he himself remained occupied with the task of burying those mutilated bodies. I consoled myself with the reflection that I had no hand in the crime. Being extremely anxious to meet that fairy, I reached hobbling, tumbling and searching, the street to which the eunuch had directed me. It was now evening. I passed the night with my mind agitated and perturbed, in a corner near the door of the house occupied by the lady. I did not hear the sound of anybody's footsteps, nor did any one enquire into my circumstances. In this helpless state, the morning appeared. When the sun rose, that lovely creature (*literally*, that moon-faced) looked at me from a window in the balcony of the house. The joy, I felt at that moment, my heart alone knows. I returned thanks to God for His mercies. In the meantime, a eunuch came to me and said 'Go and sit in the mosque there ; perhaps the object so dear to your heart may be accomplished in that place, and you may yet obtain what you so ardently desire.' Being thus, advised by that eunuch, I rose from the place where I had passed the night and, going into the mosque, took my seat there ; but my eyes were rivetted on the door and I said to myself, 'Let us see what comes out of the hidden curtain.'*

"I passed the day in restless anxiety and impatience like one who keeps the fast of Ramzán†. At last, the evening arrived, and the day that had been a regular age, came to an end (*literally*, the mountain-like load of the day was removed from my heart.) All of a sudden, the eunuch, who had directed me to the house of the fairy, came into the mosque. After finishing the evening prayer, that kind-hearted friend, who was in that fairy's secrets, approached me, gave me much consolation and, taking me by the hand, led me along with him. Proceeding onward she conducted me to a small garden and, having seated me there, said, 'Stay here till your desire of seeing

* That is, what is there in store for me.

† The Lent of the Musalmans, consisting of 30 days.

your beloved is realized.' After this, he himself took his leave, and went away, possibly to state my case to her ladyship. I amused myself with contemplating the beauty of the flowers of the garden, the lovely moonlight, and the play of the fountains in reservoirs and canals, a scene resembling that of the months of Sáwan and Bhádon (July and August); but whenever I happened to look at the roses, the image of that rose-like angel rose before my mind and when I beheld the bright moon, I recollect ed her moon-like countenance. All those beautiful sights, in her absence, were like so many thorns in my eyes.

"At last God softened her heart. After a little while, that fairy came in from the garden-door, in all the splendour of the full moon; she wore a gown with a flounce of brocade, to which was attached an ornamented border of pearls; on her head was a scarf with a hem of golden thread, a waving pattern of embroidery, and a lace, resembling the fruit of *gohkharu* * attached to it; and she was covered from head to foot with pearls. Thus adorned she entered, and stood at a little distance from me. By her coming, a new freshness was imparted to the garden, and my heart revived. After strolling about the garden for a few minutes, she sat down in the alcove on a royal *masnád* supported by a pillow, and studded with jewels. I ran, and like the moth, that flutters round the candle offered myself as a sacrifice to her and, after the manner of a slave, stood before her with joined hands. At this moment, the eunuch made his appearance and began to intercede in my behalf, begging that I might be pardoned and again taken into favour. Addressing myself to that eunuch, I said, 'This slave is guilty and culpable; whatever punishment I may be thought deserving of, let the same be inflicted on me.' The lady, being extremely displeased with me, said with a *hauteur*, 'The best thing that can be done for him now is that he should take a hundred bags of gold pieces, and having arranged his affairs, leave for his native country.'

"On hearing these words, I became like unto a block of withered wood. If anybody had cut my body at that moment, it would not have yielded one drop of blood. The world began to wear a dark look in my eyes, a sigh of despair burst involuntarily from my heart, and tears coursed down my cheeks. Except God, I had at that time no hope from any one. In the agony of my despair, I ventured to say, 'Well, cruel lady, reflect for a moment that if this unhappy wretch had coveted the riches of the world, he would not have sacrificed his life and property for you.'

* *Gohkharu*, a tree whose fruit is triangular in form.

What, has the return due to my services and to my having devoted my life to you disappeared all of a sudden from this world, that you show such unkindness to the unfortunate me ? Well, my life is no longer of use to me : to the helpless, half-dead lover there is no resource against the inconstancy and faithlessness of the mistress of his heart.' On hearing these words she was extremely annoyed, and frowning she angrily exclaimed, 'Very fine indeed ! what, art thou my lover, sir ? Has the frog too caught cold ? O fool ! for thee to talk above thy station is nothing but an idle conceit. Little mouths should not utter big words.; Enough ! be silent and do not talk in this presumptuous strain by Heaven ! had any other person committed an act of such gross impropriety, I would have caused his body to be cut in pieces and given to the kites and vultures to feed upon ; but what can I do ? Thy services ever come to my recollection. Thou wilt be best consulting thy interest to take thy way homeward now ; thy fate had decreed thee grain and water only until now in my house.' I then weeping and sobbing said, 'If it is written in my destiny that I am not to attain the wishes of my heart but to wander miserable and distracted through woods and over mountains, then I can't help it.' On hearing these words, she was vexed and said, 'These covert hints and these disgusting flatteries are not pleasing to me ; go and repeat them to those who are fit to hear them.' Then rising up in the same angry mood, she walked away to her palace. I begged and entreated to be heard, but she paid a deaf ear to what I said. Having no alternative, I too, left the place, a prey to dejection and disappointment. In short, this state of things lasted for forty days. When I became sick of strolling about the streets and lanes of the city, I would go and wander into the woods, and when I became tired of the latter, I would return to the lanes and streets of the city like a maniac. I thought not of eating and drinking during the day nor of sleep at night ; I resembled a washerman's dog, belonging neither to the house nor to the *ghat*.* The life of a human being depends upon eating and drinking ; he is a worm that feeds upon grain. No strength whatever remained in my body. Being helpless and emaciated I went and lay down under the walls of the same mosque ; where one day, the eunuch before spoken of, came to say his Friday prayers, and passed by me ; I was, at that moment, repeating in

* The word here means the place where the washerman washes his clothes. The meaning of the proverb is that I had no place which I could call as my own and where I could rest myself. Like the washerman's dog which is now at the *ghat* and anon at home, and *vice versa*, I was perpetually knocking about in the city and in the woods contiguous to it. The proverb answers to the English one, "Knocked from pillar to post."

a low and feeble voice, in consequence of my weakness, the following verse :—

‘ Give me strength of mind to bear these pangs of the heart or
strike me down .

Whatever is written in my fate, O God, let it come to pass quick.’

“Although appearance had become markedly altered and my face was such that whoever had seen me formerly would not have recognized me to be the same man, yet the eunuch, hearing my plaintive voice, turned towards me, and, regarding me with attention, he was moved with pity and in a tone of great kindness said to me, ‘ So you at last have brought yourself to this state.’ I replied, ‘ What was to happen, has now come to pass ; I devoted my property to her well-being, and I have sacrificed my life also for her. She has dealt with me as her pleasure dictated, what can I do ? ’ Hearing this, he put me in charge of a servant, and himself went into the mosque. When he had finished praying and had heard the *sermon*,* he came back to me and, having placed me in a litter, had me carried along to the palace of that cruel and indifferent fairy, and placed me outside the *chick* of her apartment. Although my looks had undergone a complete change yet, as I had been for a long while constantly in the company of that lovely creature, she must have recognized me at the first glance ; but, though she knew me well, she feigned to be a perfect stranger to me, and asked the eunuch, ‘ Who is this ? ’ The excellent person answered, ‘ This is the same unhappy ill-fated one who has fallen under the displeasure and reprehension of your grace ; this is the reason why his appearance is such ; he is being consumed by the fire of love ; and though he tries ever so hard to extinguish the flame with water of tears, yet it burns with double fury. Nothing is of the slightest service ; moreover, he is dying through shame for his fault.’ The lovely creature jocosely observed, ‘ Why dost thou tell lies ? Days ago I received the intelligence from my news-suppliers that he had safely reached his own country ; God knows who is this of whom thou art speaking.’

“ Upon this the eunuch with folded hands said, ‘ If your Highness will graciously promise security to my life, then will I make bold to make a representation to you in this man’s behalf.’ She replied, ‘ Speak, I grant thee thy life.’ The eunuch said, ‘ Your grace is by nature an appreciator of merit ; for Heaven’s sake lift up the curtain from between and recognize him and take

**Khutbah* is an oration or sermon delivered after divine service every Friday, in which the preacher blesses Muhammad, his successors and the reigning prince. (Shakespear.)

pity upon his helpless state. Ingratitude is not commendable. Whatever compassion you may be now pleased to feel for his present condition will be praiseworthy and an act of virtue on your part; to say more would be to transgress the limits of respect; whatever your grace thinks proper to do, even that is the best.'

"On hearing these words of the eunuch, she smiled and said, 'Well, whoever he is, keep him in the hospital, when he has recovered his health and is alright, his situation shall be enquired into.' The eunuch said, 'If your grace will please sprinkle, with your own hands, rose-water on him, and speak him a word or two in a kindly tone, there may yet be hope of his living; hopelessness is a bad thing; the world is supported by hope.'

"Even upon this, the fairy said not a word to console me. On hearing this dialogue I, who was tired of life, exclaimed fearlessly, 'I have no mind to live on these terms, my feet are already hanging in the grave and I must quit this world ere long. My recovery is in the hands of the princess; she may save me or she may surrender me to death, as she pleases.' At last, the great turner of hearts (God) softened the heart of that cruel fairy; she became gracious and said, 'Let the royal physicians be summoned immediately.' Soon the doctors came and assembled round me. Having felt my pulse and examined my urine, they thought over my case a long time and gave out, as the result of their diagnosis, 'It is evident that this person is in love with some one; there is no remedy for him except his being put in possession of the object of his love; when he gets her, he will obtain recovery.' When the physicians too, declared that I was suffering from love, she said, 'Take this young man to the hot bath, and having bathed him and attired him in an elegant dress, bring him into my presence.' They immediately led me out, and, having given me a bath and dressed me in a fine suit of clothes, they brought me to the fairy. That angelic creature then said in a kind tone, 'Thou hast for nothing encroached upon my life of seclusion and retirement, and brought disgrace and obloquy on me; now what else dost thou wish me to do? Speak clearly and without reserve what is in thy heart.'

"*O Durwishes!* such were my feelings at the time that I was very near dying of joy. I swelled so much through pleasure, that my coat could scarcely contain me. A perceptible change in my countenance and appearance took place. I offered thanks to God and said to her, 'At this moment you have shown yourself the most skilful of physicians, for with a single word of yours you have

restored a dead man like me to life. Behold what a wonderful change has come over me within the last hour.' Having said this I went round her three times,* and then, standing before her, said, 'Your Grace's orders are that I should speak what is in my heart. My request to you is that, having shown such kindness to your slave, you will be pleased to accept the wretched one and honour and elevate him by permitting him to kiss your feet; this boon shall be more precious than the sovereignty of all the seven climes (*i.e.*, the whole world).' On hearing these words, she was for a moment plunged in deep thought, and then having given me a side-glance she said, 'Sit down! you have done me such services and shown me such fidelity that whatever you say, becomes you; verily, the value of your constant devotion is fully impressed on my heart. Well, I agree to what you say.' The same day, in an auspicious moment and under a propitious star, the Qazit privately conducted the marriage ceremonies. After such trouble and affliction Heaven showed me the day when I obtained the summit of my wishes; but in the same degree, that my heart longed to possess that angelic creature, it felt anxious and impatient to be furnished with an explanation of those strange events which had occurred. Up to this day I was absolutely in the dark as to who that fairy was or who was that dark well-shaped negro who, at the sight of a mere bit of paper, had made over to me so many bags of gold pieces. I could not understand how in the short space of three hours an entertainment, worthy of princes, could be prepared, nor why those two innocent persons were put to death on the termination of the feast. I could not account for the anger and ingratitude she had displayed towards me after all my services, and my bearing with her whims; nor for the sudden elevation of the humble and unfortunate me to the height of happiness. In short, for these various reasons, I was so anxious to penetrate the recent mysteries that for whole eight days after the marriage ceremonies had been performed, I did not, in spite of my ardent desire to the contrary, consummate the rights of wedlock. I lay down by her side at night, and got up in the morning.

"One morning, wishing to have a bath, I asked the female slave to warm little water for me for the purpose. The princess, looking at me, smiled and remained silent. I

* The custom, purely Oriental, implies that the person who goes round, sacrifices his life at the shrine of his mistress's love, health, property, &c. The custom is observed on other occasions too. Babar, going round the bed of his beloved son Humayun, is spoken of in every school manual of Indian History.

† A secular as well as ecclesiastical functionary.

too, kept quiet. But that angelic creature was astonished at my conduct, nay the signs of anger were actually visible in her looks, so much so that she said to me one day, ‘ You are a strange man—so warm before and so cold now ! What is the meaning of all this ? If you had not powers sufficient, why did you commit such a foolish act ? ’ I mustered up courage and boldly replied, ‘ O my life, my soul ! be just, it behoves not a man to depart from the rules of justice.’ She said, ‘ What further justice do you expect from me ?—What was to happen has happened.’ I answered, ‘ Indeed, that which was my most ardent wish and desire to possess I have obtained ; but my heart is uneasy with doubts, and a person who is in my situation, with his mind racked with suspicion, feels perpetually disturbed and perplexed ; he can do nothing, and loses all that is of man in him. I had made up my mind that, after this marriage, *the summum bonum* of my hopes and my soul’s entire delight, I would ask your highness several things which I do not understand, and which I cannot fathom the mystery of, so that, hearing them explained away by your own pure lips, my heart might be at ease.’ That angelic creature frowning, said, ‘ How nice ! Have you already forgotten what I told you ? Remember how many times I have asked you not to meddle with my concerns nor to oppose me in anything, and is it right on your part to show me, contrary to custom, such disrespect ? ’ I laughed and said, ‘ As you have pardoned me such greater liberties, pardon me this one too.’ The looks of the fairy underwent a change, and flying into a temper she became a whirl-wind of fire and said, ‘ Thou has become extremely bold ; go and mind thy own business ; what advantage will it be to thee to have the explanation thou desirest ? ’ I replied, ‘ The greatest shame in this world is the exposure of our person, but those who settle down into married life, do expose their persons to each other and are thoroughly in each other’s secrets ; and now that you have accepted me in marriage and, thereby, bestowed upon me all the privileges of a husband, what secrets can you possibly withhold from me ? ’

“ Her good sense made her understand my meaning and becoming more tranquil she said, ‘ What you say is true but the thought comes into my mind that if the secrets of the unfortunate me should become divulged, it would involve me in great trouble and affliction.’ I answered, ‘ What is your grace talking of ? Do not entertain any such apprehension of me, but, on the contrary, relate, without fear, your entire history to me, never shall it pass from heart to my tongue, much less reach the ears of a third man.’ When she perceived that there was no escape

for her without relating to me her history, she was compelled to accede to my wishes and she said, 'The explanation, which you require, is fraught with many evils, but you are determined to have it, though it may be absolutely of no service to thee. Well, thy pleasure is dear to me, and I am, therefore, going to relate the events of my past life; it is thy interest as well as mine to keep them concealed from the world. Have a care!' To be brief, after many injunctions, she began to relate her history as follows :—

THE HISTORY OF THE PRINCESS OF DAMASCUS.

' The unfortunate me is the daughter of the king of Damascus. My father holds the foremost place among the Sultans (monarchs). Except me no male or female child was born to him. From the day I was born, I was brought up in the lap of luxury and in the midst of joyful surroundings under the eye of my father and mother. As I grew up, I attached myself to good-looking, lovely women; so that beautiful, fairy born playmates, the daughters of chiefs and nobles, were constantly in my company; and handsome female servants of my own age were always in attendance upon me. I enjoyed, regularly and without fail, the pleasures of dancing and music, and I had no concern with the good or evil of the world. Finding myself wholly free from all worldly cares and anxieties, I could only utter words of thankfulness and praise to God for His mercies.

' It so happened that my disposition of itself underwent such a change that the society of others ceased to interest me, nor could the gay assembly afford me the slightest pleasure; my temper became like that of a person afflicted with insanity, and my heart sad and uneasy; the presence of everybody was distasteful to me, nor did I wish to speak to any one or be spoken to by one. Seeing the state I was in, all the wet-nurses, the nurse-maids, the assistant nurses and dry-nurses, were overwhelmed with grief and, falling at my feet, begged to know the nature of my complaint. This eunuch who has long been my *confidante* and who is acquainted with all my secrets, seeing my dejection, said, ' Should the princess drink a little of the syrup obtained from *wark-ul-khyal** it is probable her complaint would be removed and she would once more become cheerful and easy in mind.' On hearing him speak so warmly in praise of the preparation, I felt a desire to taste it, and ordered him to fetch some without delay. The eunuch went out, and having prepared a flagon of that drink with all possible care and placed it in ice, he

*Name of an Indian drug. It is prepared from *charas*, a kind of hemp. It is exhilarating and intoxicating in its effects. *Ganja* is made out of it.

returned accompanied by a young boy, who handed over the flagon to me. I drank and found that it produced the effect ascribed to it by the eunuch. As a reward for his service I presented him with a rich robe, and ordered him to make a point of bringing me a flagon of the exhilarating drink every day at the same hour. From that day it became a rule with the eunuch that he came daily with the boy, who brought a goblet of intoxicating beverage, and I drank it. Under its inebriating influence I used, in the elevation of my spirits, to jest and laugh with the boy, and beguile my time. When his timidity and shyness wore off, his prattling became very agreeable and sweet, and he related many a cheering story ; nay, he would often in mimicry sigh and sob after the fashion of women. His form and features were graceful and worth seeing, and I could not help taking a strong liking to him. I was so pleased with his frolics, his fun and humour, that I began to daily bestow upon him gifts and rewards, but the wretch always came into my presence dressed in the same beggarly clothes, and even these had become dirty and soiled by constant use.

'One day, I said to him, 'You have received a good deal of money from my treasury, but you are as meanly habited as ever; what is the reason of it ? Have you squandered away the money, or have you hoarded it up ?' When the boy heard these encouraging words and found me enquiring into his condition, his eyes filled with tears, and he said, 'Whatever your grace has bestowed on this slave my master has taken from me ; he has not given a single pice out of it. With what shall I make other clothes, and appear more decently dressed in your presence ? It is no fault of mine ; I cannot help it.' On hearing this humble reply, I was moved with pity at his wretched condition, and I gave immediate instructions to the eunuch with respect to him, saying, 'From this day forward let this boy be brought up and educated in your society ; get some suits of decent clothes made for him and give him the same to wear, and don't let him mix and play with idle boys ; moreover, it is my wish that he should be taught respectful manners, so that he may be fit for my royal service, and know how to wait upon me !' The eunuch duly carried out my orders and, perceiving how my inclination leaned towards the lad, he took the greatest possible care of him ! Ere long, from ease and good living, his colour and complexion had undergone a complete change ; he had, as it were, cast off his slough. I tried my utmost to restrain my inclinations, but the sweet face of the rogue had made such a profound impression on my heart that the intensity of my love for him urged me to keep him constantly clasped to my bosom

' At last, I admitted him into my companionship and, dressing him in rich clothes of various kinds and jewels of different colours, I used to fondly gaze at him. In short his being constantly with me was a comfort to my eyes, and a solace to my heart. Every moment I lavished kindnesses and favours on him. At last, my condition was such that if he was absent from my sight even for a moment, in consequence of some urgent work, I felt disturbed and uneasy. In a few years, he became a full-grown youth, the dawn appeared on his cheeks, and his form and figure developed a beautiful symmetry. The servants of the courts began to talk about him and the door-keepers, errand-boys, house-guards, relief guards, attendants, mace-bearers, all these forbade him from entering the seraglio. Finally, his coming into it was entirely stopped. For me, there was no rest without him; one moment in his absence seemed an age to me! When these distressing circumstances were communicated to me I felt as distracted as if the day of judgment had come for me. I was in a dilemma. I could not give expression to the wishes of my heart, or reveal my feelings, and yet to live without him was impossible for me, I knew not where to seek relief.

' O God! What shall I do?' I exclaimed in my agony. A strange kind of uneasiness took possession of my mind. In my distraction I summoned the very eunuch who was my *confidante*, and thus addressed him, ' I desire to look after and take care of that lad. At present it seems advisable to me that having furnished him with a capital of a thousand pieces of gold, you should set up for him a jeweller's shop in the chauk so that by engaging himself in trade he may, by the profits thereof, live comfortably. Moreover, build him an elegant house near my palace, buy him slaves, both male and female and, having hired servants and attendants, and fixed their salaries, place them near his person, so that he may be well off and easy in every way. The eunuch provided him with a house, opened a jeweller's shop for him, and furnished him with everything necessary to carry on the trade. In a short space of time his shop became so flourishing and so widely known that whatever magnificent *Khillat* and costly jewels were required for the king and the nobles, could be procured from there only. By degrees, his shop prospered to such extent that all the various curiosities and rarities of the different countries in the world were to be found there. The trade of all other jewellers became comparatively languid. In short, no one could compete with him in the city, nor in any other country, and he made *lakhs** of rupees in this business. But as far as

*A *Lakh* is a hundred thousand.

myself was concerned, grief for his absence began to daily tell upon my health and spirits. No plan could be fixed upon, which might enable me to see him and to thereby comfort my heart. At last, with a view to gratify my passionate longing, I sent for the eunuch, who was in my secrets, so that I might ask his advice in the affair. When he came, I said to him, 'I can think of no expedient, by which I may see the young man for a moment and restore ease and comfort to my heart, except this, that a subterranean passage be dug from his house to mine, and thus an under-ground communication be established between the two.' I had no sooner expressed my wish than the eunuch set about the business, and ere many days had passed, the desired mine was dug. On the approach of evening, the eunuch would secretly and in silence conduct the youth to the seraglio, through the under-ground passage, and we would pass the night in eating, drinking, in pleasure and merriment. I felt happy when he came, and he was rejoiced to see me. When the morning star appeared and the *muazzin** announced the time for morning prayers, the eunuch would convey the youth by the same passage to his house. With the exception of the eunuch and the two nurses who had suckled me, no person had any knowledge of these circumstances.

'A long time passed away in this manner. One day it so happened that when the eunuch went to call him, according to custom, he saw that the young man was silent and absorbed in anxious thought. The eunuch asked, 'Is all well? Why are you in such low spirit to-day? Come, her grace has sent for you.' To this the youth made no reply, but remained silent as before. The eunuch returned disappointed and represented to me the youthful merchant's strange behaviour. As the devil was upon me, I could not, even after such conduct on his part, banish him from my heart. Had I known that my love and affection for that ungrateful and faithless wretch would, in the end, bring disgrace and dishonour upon me, and that my honour and good name would be at stake, I would have severed my connection with him that very instant, and done penance for my past transgression. I would never have, from that moment, pronounced his name, nor surrendered my heart to the shameless fellow. But it was even so ordained. Not only did I take no notice of his improper behaviour, but I went so far as to consider his not coming as the affection and airs of a love. The reward which my imprudence and infatuation has brought me, is that thou, too, hast become acquainted with these events

* In Muhammadan countries a public crier for prayers.

without seeing them ; or else, where wert thou, and where was I ? Well, let bygones be bygones Without noticing the air of that ass, I sent him a second message by the eunuch, saying, ‘ If thou failest to come to me this very moment, I will contrive, somehow or other, to come to thee. But my coming to thee might lead to most unpleasant consequences ; for if our secret is discovered, it will involve thee in ruin and destruction. Do not, therefore, act so as to bring disgrace upon us both ; it is best that thou come to me without delay, or else know that I shall be with thee in another instant.’ When this message was delivered to him, he perceived that I was deeply in love with him and, putting on an ugly face, he came with disagreeable looks and airs

‘ When he had taken his seat by me, I asked him, ‘ What is the reason of this coolness and ill-humour to-day? You never showed such insolence and impertinence before, but always came without making any excuses’ To this he answered, ‘ I was a poor fellow sunk in total obscurity : by the favour of your Highness and through your protection and influence I have arrived at the position I now occupy, and I pass my days in affluence and ease ; I constantly pray for your life and prosperity ; I have committed this fault in anticipation of your Highness’s forgiveness, and entreat your pardon.’ As I loved him from the core of my heart, I took his hollow professions of friendship and attachment as genuine, and not only overlooked his wickedness, but asked him in a tone of encouragement and affection, ‘ What great difficulty has arisen that you are so pensive and thoughtful ? Mention it and measures shall be adopted to remove it too ’

‘ In short, in a tone of humility, he replied, ‘ Every thing is difficult to me, but easy to you.’ At last from his roundabout discourse and from his gloomy mind it appeared that a garden, abounding in verdure, with a magnificent house situated near his own in the centre of the city and having reservoirs, ponds and masonry wells in it, was for sale, and that along with the garden a singing slave-girl, who thoroughly understood the science and practice of music, was also to be sold ; but these two were to be sold together and not the garden alone, like the *cat tied to a camel’s neck** ; and that whoever purchased the garden, must also purchase the slave ‘ The best of

* The proverb is based on the following story —An Arab, coming to lose his camel, vowed, in case he recovered it, to sell it for a *dinar* (6d). The animal was found, and the Arab repented of his vow. He had, however, recourse to a stratagem to get out of the fix, and it was this :—He tied a cat to the animal’s neck and going to the bazar, cried out, “ Here is a camel for sale, only for one *dinar*, but it must go with the cat, for which I must have a thousand *dinars*. They are not to be sold separately.”

the fun is,' said he, 'that the price of the garden is a *lakh of rupees* and that of the slave-girl, *five lakhs*. Your slave cannot raise such a large sum at present.' I perceived that his heart ardently longed to buy them, and that it was for this reason that he was sad, thoughtful and embarrassed. Notwithstanding he was sitting near me, his countenance was sorrowful and his heart dejected; and inasmuch as it pleased me to make him happy every hour and every moment, I immediately issued these instructions to the eunuch, 'Go and have the price of the garden and the slave-girl settled to-morrow morning and, having got their bills of sale drawn up in due form, make them over to this man; let the price of both be paid from the royal treasury.' On hearing this order the youth thanked me by making an obeisance to me; his face brightened, and we spent the night, as usual, in pleasure and enjoyment. As soon as the morning dawned, he took his leave. The eunuch, in accordance with the instructions he had received from me, purchased the garden and the slave-girl, and made them over to the merchant.

'One day, in the season of spring, I happened to be in a charming spot. The clouds were hanging low, small drops of rain were falling, the lightning too was flashing through the murky clouds, and a gentle breeze was blowing. It was a lovely scene all around. The moment my eye lighted on the wine-bottles and flagons of various colours, tastefully arranged in the recesses in the walls, my heart longed to take a draught. After I had finished two or three cups, all of a sudden the thought of the newly purchased garden came into my mind. In the exhilarated state of my spirits, due to liquor and the charming scene which surrounded me, I had an intense desire to take a stroll in the garden, though only for a moment. When misfortunes come, the dog will bite one mounted on a camel.* I took a female attendant with me and went to the young man's house by the subterranean passage; thence I proceeded towards the garden, whose beauty I saw actually vied with that of Paradise itself. The drops of rain which had fallen on the green leaves of trees looked like pearls set in emeralds, and the redness of flowers on that cloudy day appeared as charming and lovely as the twilight in the shadow of the evening; the canals, filled with water to the brim, presented the appearance of sheets of mirrors, and the waves were rippling.

*The proverb is meant to illustrate another, *there is no remedy against fate*. The misfortunes, which fate sends us, we must bear, whether we will or no. The arm of fate is long, and it will reach us, no matter where we are.

" In short, I was strolling about in every direction in that garden, when the day vanished, and the shadows of the evening came on. At this moment the young man appeared in one of the avenues in the garden and, as soon as he perceived me, he advanced with great respect and warmth of affection and, taking my hand in his, led me to a summer-house with twelve doors. On entering it, the beauty of the garden vanished from my mind, so magnificent and soul-entrancing was the scene my eyes lighted on there. The illumination was splendid. On every side, gerandoles in the shape of cypresses and lotuses, magic lanterns, lamps meant for large assemblies, and shaded lights were lit, and yielded such glorious light that *Shab-barat* itself, with its moonlight and its lamps, would appear dark in comparison with it. On one side, fire-works, resembling *fountains, pomegranates, camomile flowers, chumpa flowers, pearls, blue-lights, rockets, catherins wheels, hand-flowers, jesamine flowers, crackers and stars* were displayed."

" In the meantime clouds dispersed and the moon appeared like a mistress dressed in purple. The sight was superb. Everything around became bathed in moonlight. The young man, addressing himself to me said, ' Let us go and sit in the balcony which commands the view of the entire garden ' I had become such a fool that whatever the wretch proposed, I did without the slightest hesitation. Now he led me such a dance that he dragged me upstairs to the balcony, a place so high that all the houses of the city and the lights of the bazar were clearly visible from it (literally, formed its ' lower garden. ') I sat happy and delighted with my arms thrown round the neck of the youth, when a woman, extremely ugly and deformed and born, as it were, of a hearth, entered with a bottle of wine in her hand. Her sudden entrance was extremely disagreeable to me and, on surveying her appearance, I was greatly alarmed. In my confusion, I asked the young man, ' Who is this singular object, and whence hast thou picked her up? ' The youth, with folded arms, replied, ' This is the identical slave that was purchased along with the garden through your gracious assistance.' I perceived that the fool had bought her with eager desire, and it was not improbable that his heart was inclined towards her. For this reason, I felt disturbed and displeased, and remained silent; but from this moment, my mind was agitated and a feeling of resentment pervaded my whole frame. Moreover, that vile wretch had the impudence to make that hag our cup-bearer. In drinking the wine she supplied, I was, as it were, drinking my own blood and was as uneasy as a parrot shut up in the same cage with a crow. I could not find a chance to get

away, nor could I bear to stay. To make a long story short, the liquor was double distilled and so strong that on drinking it a man became a beast. She served the young man with two or three cups of the fiery liquid in succession, and I too, being importuned by the youth, drank off, sore against my will, half a cup of that 'fire-water.' At last that shameless strumpet, likewise got dead drunk, and began to take unbecoming liberties with that accursed one, and that vile creature also, being inebriate, grew disrespectful and began to behave indecently. I was so much ashamed at what I beheld that had earth opened under my feet at that moment, I would have readily plunged into its bosom; but so strong was my love for him that even after all these circumstances, I said nothing. But he was a villain by birth, and did not understand the value of such extraordinary forbearance on my part. In the heart of intoxication he swallowed two cups more, so that what little sense he had still left, was also gone, and he laid aside all fear of me. Lost to all sense of shame, the villainous creature, overpowered by lust, consummated before me his career of infamous indecency with the frightful hag, who gave herself many airs and appeared ridiculous and squeamish. The one was as ungrateful as the other was shameless—in every way a well matched pair* indeed. My state at the time, was like that of a *doomaneet* who has lost her tune and is singing in utter defiance of the rules of music.† I was cursing myself for having come there, and was saying to myself that I had been deservedly punished for my folly. But how long could I bear it. I was on fire from head to foot, and rolling on burning coals. In my paroxysm of rage, I repeated to myself the proverb, 'The bull leapt not but but its load! Who will see this sight?' and then rose from my place. That drunkard guessed his ruin in my actions. He foresaw that in case I was now offended, he should rue his folly on the morrow,‡ for I would not fail to be terribly revenged. Hence he thought it best to put an end to my existence whilst I was yet in his power. Having, after consulting his hideous mistress and formed this resolution in his mind, he threw his *patka*|| round his neck and fell at my

* *Fiably*, as the soul, so are the angels. The guardian angels of every person are good or bad according as he himself is good or bad.

† A Musalman female singer.

‡ The meaning is, my state may be better imagined than described.

§ A proverb applied to persons who attempt things beyond their powers.

|| *Patka* is a piece of cloth worn round the waist. Prostrating before person with the *patka* round one's neck is the most abject mark of submission.

feet and, taking off his turban from his head, he began to entreat my pardon in the most humiliating and abject tone possible. My heart was infatuated towards him, (literally, had become like a child's top for him); he led me as he chose, and like the handmill he turned me just as he pleased; inward I was completely at his mercy and did what he desired me to without the slightest objection. Somehow or other, he managed to pacify me and prevailed upon me to retake my seat, and having refilled some three or four cups with the fiery liquor, he drank the contents off and gave me at the same time some of the spirits to drink also. I was already inflamed with rage, and when I drank the strong liquor, I became instantly senseless and utterly oblivious of myself. Seeing this, that unfeeling and ungrateful and stone-hearted wretch—that monster of cruelty—struck me with his sword, and thought he had killed me. On receiving the wounds my eyes opened, and I uttered these words, 'Well, as I have acted, so I have been rewarded; but do thou save thyself from the consequences of shedding this innocent blood of mine; wash my blood from thy clothes, lest some unrelenting heart should prosecute thee and bring thee to justice; what has happened, happened; do not reveal this secret to any one; I have not withheld even my life from thee.' Then committing him to the care of a merciful Providence, I fainted away from loss of blood, and lost all consciousness of myself. Perhaps the butcher, thinking me dead, put me into the box you saw, and let me down from the wall of the fort. I wished nobody ill; but these misfortunes were written in my fate, and the lines of fate can never be effaced. It is my eyes to which all these calamities are traceable; for had there been no strong desire in me to behold beautiful persons, that villain would not have proved my curse. God worked it out so, that He brought you to where I lay weltering in my blood, and made you the means of saving my life. After suffering these indignities, I am ashamed to reflect that I should yet live or show my face to any one; but what can I do? It is not in our power to die when we choose. God having killed me, restored me to life; let us see what fate has yet in store for me. Apparently your zeal and services have been useful, inasmuch as I have been cured of such dangerous wounds. Your life and property, you devoted to my use, and whatever were your means you offered them cheerfully. In those days finding you destitute of money and anxious, I wrote that letter to *Seedee Bahar*, my treasurer. I informed the person addressed that I was in such and such a place, safe and in health, and I requested him to convey to my revered mother the intelligence of my unfortunate situation.

'The *Seedee* sent by you those trays of money for my expenses, and when I sent you to the shop of Yusaf, the young merchant, for the purpose of purchasing jewels and dresses, it was in the belief that that mean-spirited wretch, so ready to become friends with everybody, thinking thee a stranger, would probably form an intimacy with you, and, indulging his conceit, would invite and entertain you. It turned out just as I had expected ; he did exactly what I foresaw. When you came to me after having pledged your word to him to return, and related to me how he had invited you to a feast, and had insisted upon your coming, I was pleased at the circumstance ; for I was well aware that in case you went to his entertainment, you would give him an invitation in return, and that he would eagerly accept it ; for this reason I sent you back without delay. After three days when you came back from the feast and, quite ashamed, made me many apologies for having kept away so long I, to make you easy in your mind, answered, 'It does not matter ; you came when he gave you leave to come ; but it is not right to be wanting in delicacy and etiquette ; we must never bear another's debt of gratitude without an idea of paying it ; now do you go and invite him also and bring him along with you.' When you went away to his dwelling, I saw that our house was destitute of the requisites of an entertainment, and I knew not what I should do, if he came. In this dilemma, I saw a ray of hope. From time immemorial it has been the custom of the rulers of this country that, for eight months in the year, they remain away from the capital for political purposes, and for the sake of collecting revenue, and the remaining four months which make up the rainy season, they reside at the seat of government. In those days, this unfortunate wretch's father had been out for the last three or four months to arrange the affairs of the different provinces.

'While you were gone to bring the young merchant with you, *Seedee Bahar* represented my case to the Queen, my mother. Overwhelmed with shame for my misdeeds, I went and stood before my parent and related to her the history of my amours in detail.

'From motherly love and good sense, she had concealed the fact of disappearance, saying to herself, 'God knows how all this will end ; it is not proper for me to make this circumstance, fraught with disgrace, and dishonour to the family, public yet, and for my sake she had kept my errors and my faults carefully hidden in her maternal breast, but she had all along been in search of me. When she saw me in this condition and heard my sorrowful history, her eyes filled with tears, and she said. 'O unfortunate, unpromising wretch ! thou

hast deliberately blasted the honour and glory of this royal house ; a thousand pities that thou art still alive ; would to Heaven I had, in place of thee, given birth to a stone ; I should have been then patient, even now there is time for thee to repent : what was decreed in thy destiny has come to pass ; what wilt thou do next ? Wilt thou live or die ? ' Extremely ashamed, I replied, ' It was written in the destiny of this shameless one, that I should live in such disgrace and dishonour after surviving such dangers ; death would have been preferable to this sort of existence, but although the mark of infamy is stamped on my forehead, yet I have not done anything of a nature as would compromise the good name of my parents. The great pain I now feel is that those vile wretches should escape my vengeance and indulge in mutual pleasure and delight, while I suffer such agony from their hands. It is a pity that I should be unable to avenge my wrongs on them I entreat Your Majesty to issue instructions to the steward to furnish my house, in the best manner possible, with all the requisites of an entertainment, so that, under the pretence of inviting those villains to it, I may send for them, inflict upon them the punishment due to their crimes, and revenge myself ; as the merchant lifted his hand upon me and wounded me, in the same manner may I be enabled to hack them to pieces, so that the flame of vengeance raging in my breast may be quenched ; if my wishes are not granted, this fire of resentment will have ere long reduced me to ashes.'

' On hearing this, my mother, moved by maternal sympathy and affection, became kind, and concealed my faults in her own bosom, and sent all these necessaries for the entertainment by the same eunuch who is my *confidante*. All the attendants, whose presence was necessary, came and took up their respective duties. In the evening you brought that vile wretch. I wished that that harlot should come also and for this reason I laid my positive commands on you to send for her. After she had come and the company were assembled, every one, having largely drunk of wine, became intoxicated and perfectly insensible, and you too, got dead drunk and lay like a corpse. I desired a *gilmaq** to strike off the heads of the youth and his mistress with a sword. She forthwith unsheathed her scimitar, cut off their heads and dyed bodies with their own blood. The reason why I became displeased and angry with you was that I had given you permission simply to look after the entertainment and not to join in drinking with those whom you had known only for a few days. Certainly, this folly on your part did not please me, for what friendship

* An amazon of the East.

and fidelity can be expected from one who drinks himself into insensibility? But the services you have rendered me give you a claim upon my gratitude, such as compels me to overlook your past errors: and now behold, I have related to you my history fully and faithfully, is there any other wish in which you would like to be gratified? Just as I have complied with all your requests, do you, in the same manner, also carry out my orders. My advice is that it is no longer advisable or safe for you or me to stay in this city; but, of course, you are at perfect liberty to do as you think best.

"O pets of God! the princess, having said this much, became silent. I, who with heart and soul valued her wishes above everything else and was entangled in the net of her love, replied, 'Whatever be your august pleasure, that is the best; this slave will cheerfully carry out all that you desire.'

"When the princess found me amenable to her orders, and ready to serve her, she said, 'Having sent for from the royal stable two swift and strong steeds, that in running may vie with the wind, keep them in readiness.' I went and picked out a couple of spirited and superbly beautiful coursers, and had them saddled and brought to our house. When a part of the night remained, the princess put on a male dress, and having armed herself to the teeth, mounted on one of the horses. I got upon the other likewise armed, and we set out in a particular direction. When the night was over and the morning appeared, we arrived on the bank of a large tank. Having dismounted, we washed our hands and faces, had a hasty breakfast, then got upon our horses again and set off. Occasionally, the princess would speak a few words and say, 'I have for your sake abandoned shame, country, wealth, parents and everything else; now it may not happen so that you too should behave towards me like that cruel, faithless one.' Sometimes I would talk of different matters to beguile the tediousness of the journey, and anon would reply to her questions and doubts as follows:—'Princess! all men are not alike, there must have been some defect in that vile creature's parentage, which made him behave in the manner he did; I have sacrificed my life and my property for you, and you have dignified me in every way; I am now your unbought slave, and should you cause shoes to be made of my skin and wear them, I would not in the least complain.' In such conversation we passed our time.

Our sole business was to travel day and night as fast as we could. At times if we dismounted anywhere through fatigue, we hunted down birds and animals of the woods and, striking a fire with the flint, we roasted and ate them with our salt, a supply of which we had taken with us at

starting. On such occasions, we used to let loose our horses to graze, and they, feeding on the grass and the leaves of the forest, managed to appease their hunger. One day we reached a large even plain, totally destitute of all habitation. No human face was to be seen there. But even in such dreary and frightful surroundings the day appeared festive and the night joyful, for there was the princess in my company. Moving on our journey, we all of a sudden, arrived at the banks of a large stream, the sight of which was sufficient to appal the boldest heart. As we surveyed the stream, standing on the bank, we could plainly perceive that, as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but water. It appeared limitless and no boat or raft was to be seen anywhere. 'O God,' we cried, 'how shall we cross this sea?' For a moment we remained plunged in thought not knowing how to get over the difficulty. At last the idea struck me that, leaving the princess, I should go in search of a boat or a vessel. 'Moreover,' I thought, the princess will have time to rest while I find some means to pass over. Having formed this plan, I said, 'O princess! if you will permit me, I will go and look out for a ferry or a ford in this stream.' She answered, 'I am quite knocked up and am besides hungry and thirsty; I shall rest here a little, while you make some arrangements for passing over to the other side.'

"On this spot there was an immense *peepul tree*,* with a shade so vast that if a thousand horsemen took shelter under its widespread branches, they might safely defy both sun and rain. Having seated the princess under it, I set out, and looked on all sides to find somewhere, on the ground or the river, some trace of a human being. I searched all over, but not a soul was to be seen anywhere. Disappointed and hopeless I came back, but lo! the princess was not to be seen under the tree. How can I portray the state of my mind at that moment! My senses left me, and I became utterly distracted—a regular maniac. Sometimes I would climb up to the tree and would examine every leaf and branch, hoping to find her there and then I would let go my hold and, falling on the ground, go round the roots of the tree as a sacrifice. Now I would weep and shriek at my helpless condition, now run from east to west, and again from north to south. In short, I storned and searched, but could find no trace of that unattainable and invaluable jewel. When I found that my efforts were of no avail, then crying and throwing dust over my head, I began to

* A tree venerated by the Hindoos. Its leaves ar heart-shaped. It is supposed to be the haunt of evil-spirits.

look for her everywhere. I suspected that some genius (evil spirit) had carried off my fairy, and dealt me a mortal blow ; or else that some one from her country had followed her close and, finding her alone, had prevailed upon her to return to Damascus. Maddened with these thoughts I threw off my clothes and, becoming a naked *fāqīr*, I wandered about in the country of Syria from morn till eve, in search of the lost princess, and at night lay down to rest in any place I could find. I searched for her in every nook and corner of the kingdom, but could find no trace of her disappearance. Then the idea came into my head that since I could not find any clue to the whereabouts of the dear one, I would not survive her loss. I perceived a mountain in the wilderness ; I ascended it, and made up my mind to fling myself down from its summit, so that my head and face, striking against the stones, might be dashed to pieces, and my agonized soul be freed from the tortures it was suffering.

" Having formed this resolution in my mind I was on the point of throwing myself headlong from the mountain and had even lifted up my foot when some one seized me by the arm. In the meanwhile, my senses returned and, turning round, I saw a horseman dressed in green, with a veil thrown over his face, who said to me, ' Why dost thou deliberately aim at thy destruction ? It is rank infidelity to despair of God's mercy ; as long as there is breath, so long there is hope. A few days hence thou shalt meet three *Darweshes* in the country of *Ram*, as afflicted as thyself, involved in the same difficulties, and who have met with adventures similar to thine ; the name of the ruler of that country is *Azād Bakht* ; he is also in great trouble ; when he meets you and the other three *Darweshes*, the wishes and desires of the heart of each of you will be fully realized.' I instantly laid hold of the stirrup of this mysterious horsemanship, kissed it and exclaimed, ' O messenger from Heaven ! the words that have fallen from your lips, have been a balm to my lacerated heart ; but for God's sake, tell me who you are and what is your honoured name ? ' He answered that his name was *Murtzā Ali*,* and his office was that whenever any one happened to be placed in a position of difficulty or danger, that same moment he was even at hand to extricate him therefrom. Saying this much, he disappeared from my sight. In short, having derived great comfort from the happy news imparted to me by my spiritual guide Ali, the remover of difficulties, I formed the design of repairing to Constanti-

* Muhammad's son-in-law. He is also called *mushkil-kusha* or the remover of difficulties. The descendants of Ali wear green dresses, which they look upon as sacred.

nople. On the way, I sufferep all the hardships and misfortunes written in my fate, in the hope of meeting the Princess. I have, through the grace of God, arrived at my destination, and, assisted by my good fortune, become honoured by your presence. The promised meeting has taken place between us, and we have had the benefit of each other's society and conservation. It now remains for us to be brought face to face with the king *Azad Bakht*, and to become acquainted with him. After all this we are bound to reach the goal of our wishes. Do ye also pray to God for success, and say *Amen*. O ye spiritual guides, the adventures which have befallen this afflicted and distracted wanderer, have been fully narrated to you ; now let us wait for the time when my sorrow and distress will be changed to joy and pleasure by the recovery of the lost Princess." *Azad Bakht*, concealed in silence in a corner, heard the story of the first *Darwesh* with rapt attention, and was highly pleased ; he now began to listen to the history of the second *Darwesh*.

ADVENTURES OF THE SECOND DARWESH.

When it came to the turn of the second *Darwesh* to speak, he sat down with his legs across in front,* and thus began :—

Verses.

1. O friends, listen to the story of this *fāqīr* a little ; I will relate it to you from beginning to end—listen ;

2. No physician can cure my ailment : it is beyond remedy,—listen.

“ O ye dressed in rags this humble person is the Prince of the kingdom of Persia. Men, conversant in every science, are there ; hence *Isfahan Nisfijahan* (*Isphahán* is half the world) has passed into a proverb, which is only too well known. In all the seven climes of the world there is no country which is equal to that kingdom. The star of that place is the sun, and of all the seven planets it is the greatest.† The climate of Persia is delightful, and the inhabitants are intelligent and refined in their manners. My father who was the King of that country, with a view to teach me the rules and lessons of government, selected a number of wise tutors in every science and art, and placed them over me, so that, having received thorough instruction in every branch of learning, I might grow up into a competent ruler. By the time I was fourteen years old, I had become well versed in every department of human knowledge. I had acquired polite conversation, agreeable manners, and all that is fit and requisite for Princes to know ; and my inclinations, night and day, urged me to seek the company of the wise and learned, and to hear them relate the histories of different countries, the achievements of aspiring and ambitious monarchs, and of men of renown.

“ One day, a learned companion, who had extensive knowledge of history, and had seen a great deal of the world, observed to me that, although no reliance could be placed on the life of man, yet such excellent qualities were often found in him that, by virtue of them, the names of many would be handed down, with praise, on the lips of the people to the day of judgment. Upon this, I said to him, ‘ If you will relate in detail a few instances on that score I will hear them attentively and strive to act accordingly.’ In compliance with my wishes, my companion related some of the adventures of *Hátim Tai* in the following manner :—‘ In the time of *Hátim* there was a King of Arabia, named *Nauful*, who bore great enmity towards *Hátim* on account of his great good name,

* The meaning is, that he placed himself at his ease.

† According to the belief of the Muhammadans, a constellation precides over the destiny of each of the seven “climes” into which they divide the world.

and, having collected a considerable force, he marched against him with the intention of fighting. *Hatim* was a God-fearing and good man, and he thus thought, 'If I too, should make preparations for war, the creatures of God would be slain, and much innocent blood would be shed, for this the punishment of heaven will fall upon me.' Reflecting on this, he, quite alone, and taking with him nothing but his life fled and concealed himself in a cave in the mountains. When the news of *Hatim's* flight was conveyed to *Nauful*, he seized all his property and confiscated his dwelling, and caused it to be proclaimed that, whoever would trace the fugitive out and seize him, should receive five hundred pieces of gold from the Royal Treasury. On hearing the proclamation, everybody became eager to secure the prize, and began to diligently search for *Hatim*.

" One day, an old man and his wife, accompanied by two or three of their little children, chanced to arrive at the mouth of the very cave where *Hatim* was concealed. Their object being to pick up wood,—they began to gather fuel in the forest. The old woman observed to her husband 'Had our days been fortunate, we should have come across *Hatim* somewhere or other and, seizing him, have carried him to *Nauful*; upon this he would have bestowed upon us five hundred pieces of gold, which would have enabled us to live in comfort, and released us from this life of toil and care.' The old wood-cutter said, ' What are you talking this nonsense for? It was decreed in our fate that we should break sticks every day, place them on our heads, and dispose them of in the market and, with the money thus earned, purchase bread and salt; or that a tiger should carry us off from the forest: peace, mind thy business; why should *Hatim* fall into our hands, and the King should cause so much money to be paid to us.' The old woman heaved a heavy sigh and held her tongue.

" *Hatim* had heard the words of the old pair, and considered it unmanly and ungenerous to keep his unfortunate self concealed to preserve his life, and not to help those wretches to realize their wishes.

" Thus it is, that a man, who does not possess a sympathetic and kind heart, is not a man in the true sense of the word, and he, who cannot feel for the distress of others, is a butcher.

Verse.

For the sake of exercising compassion,

God created man, else angels were not wanting for devotion.

" In short, the manly mind of *Hatim* would not let him remain concealed after what he had, with his own ears,

the stay and support of the throne, and the pillars of the

heard from the old wood-cutter and his aged spouse ; he at once came out from his place of concealment, and said to the old man, ‘ O friend ! I myself am *Hatim*, take me along with thee to *Nauful* : on seeing me he will pay thee the amount of money he has promised for my capture.

“ The old wood-cutter replied, ‘ It is true that my interest and welfare lies in doing so, but who knows what sort of treatment he will accord to thee ; if he kills thee, what shall I do ? I can never be prevailed upon to deliver thee into the hands of thy enemy for my own individual gain ; how long shall I enjoy the promised reward, and how long shall I live ? I must die one day ; then what answer shall I make to God ?’ *Hatim* begged and entreated him to do as he was asked, saying, ‘ Conduct me to the King. I say so of my own free will ; I have ever desired that my wealth and life may be of service to my fellow-creatures, for that is the best use I can make of them.’ But the old man could not be induced to take *Hatim* with him and receive the promised reward. At last, driven to despair, *Hatim* said, ‘ If you won’t carry me in the way I desire, I shall go of my own accord to the King, and tell him, this old man kept me concealed in a mountain cave in the forest.’ The old man laughed and said, ‘ If I am to receive evil for good, then hard will be my fate.’ During this dialogue other men also arrived, and a crowd gathered round them. They saw that the person standing before them was the identical *Hatim* they were in search of, and hence they instantly seized him and carried him along. The old man, too, a little behind them, followed them in silent grief. When they brought him before *Nauful*, he enquired who had captured and brought the fugitive into the royal presence. A good-for-nothing, hard-hearted fellow bawled out, ‘ Who could have performed such a deed but myself ? The honour of such a heroic feat is mine, and I have planted the banner of glory in the sky.’ Another boaster cried in a vaunting tone, ‘ I spent many days searching for him in the woods and, having caught him at last, have brought him here ; have some consideration for my trouble, and let me have the proclaimed reward.’ Thus influenced by avidity for the promised pieces of gold, every man contended he had effected the capture. The old man, seated apart from the rest, in a corner, was in silence, listening to the vauntings of these boasters, and weeping for *Hatim*. When they had finished recounting each his individual act of bravery and enterprise, *Hatim*, addressing himself to the King, said, ‘ If you would know the truth, then let me inform Your Highness that it is that old man, standing apart from all, who has brought me ; if you have some knowledge of physiog-

nomy, ascertain the fact for yourself, and give the man the sum you have fixed as the price of my capture ; for of all the members of the body, the tongue is the most sacred. It is obligatory upon a person to perform what he has promised ; for, in other respects, God has given tongues to the lower animals too ; what then would be the difference between a man and a brute ? '

" *Nanful* called the old wood-cutter near him, and said, ' Declare upon thy honour what is the fact : who has captured and brought *Hatim* here ? ' The poor fellow related truly all that had passed from beginning to end, and added, ' *Hatim* has come here of his own free-will for my sake.

" On hearing this manly act of *Hatim*, the King was greatly astonished, and exclaimed, ' Unique is thy generosity ! even thy life thou hast not hesitated to endanger for the benefit of others.' With respect to all those who falsely asserted that they had seized *Hatim*, the king ordered their hands to be tied behind their backs and, instead of 500 pieces of gold, five hundred blows with slippers to be given them on their heads, so that their brains might come out.

" Instantly the slippers began to come down cracking on their heads, and, ere many minutes had passed, they became quite bald. True it is that to tell a lie is such a sin that no other sin equals it : may God preserve every one from this calamity, and not give him an inclination to indulge in falsehoods ; many persons persist in telling lies, but when their falsehood is detected, they are punished as they deserve.

" In short, having rewarded all of them according to their deserts, *Nauful* thus reflected within himself, ' It is contrary to gentlemanly conduct and manliness of character to bear enmity and ill-feeling towards a man like *Hatim*, whose bounty and good offices are shared by large numbers of people, who does not grudge even his life to the needy, and who is devoted to God, from heart and soul.' He immediately seized *Hatim*'s hand with great cordiality and warmth, and said, ' Why should not it be so ? It is only natural that a generous man like you should be so good.' After this the King, showing him great respect and attention, gave him a seat near himself, and reinstated him, without delay, in the possession of his lands and property, the wealth and moveables which he had confiscated. He bestowed upon him anew the chieftainship of the tribe of *Tai*, and caused five hundred pieces of gold to be paid to the old man from the royal treasury. The honest wood-cutter went away, invoking blessings on the King's head.

" When I had heard the whole of this adventure of *Hatim*'s, a feeling of emulation arose in my heart, and I said to myself, ' He was merely a chief of his own tribe that

Hatim, who, by virtue of one single act of generosity, has acquired a name that lives down to this day ; whilst I, by the grace of God, am King of the whole of Persia ; if I were to remain excluded from this good fortune, it would be a great shame ; in reality, there is no quality greater than liberality in this world, for whatever a man gives away in charity here, he receives the return thereof in the next. If any one sows one single grain, how much is produced from it ? With these ideas impressed on my mind, I sent for the head architect, and desired him to erect, with all possible speed, a magnificent edifice without the city, with forty high and wide doors. Ere long, a spacious palace, such as I desired, was built and got ready, and in that place every day, at all hours from morning till evening, I used to distribute gold and silver pieces among the poor and needy ; whoever asked for anything, I would give it to him to the utmost of his desire.

' In short, the needy came daily through the forty gates and went away supplied with whatever they wanted. Once it so happened that a *faqir* came in from the front door and asked for something in charity. I gave him a gold piece ; then the same person entered through the next door, and asked for two pieces of gold ; though I knew very well that he was the same *faqir*, I intentionally overlooked the circumstance, and gave him what he wanted. Thus he commenced to come in through each door, and to increase a piece of gold in his demand each time, and I too, feigning ignorance of the circumstance, kept supplying his varying demands. At last, he entered through the fortieth door, and asked for forty gold coins, which I likewise caused to be given him. Having received so much, the *faqir* once more entered by the first door, and again asked alms. This conduct on his part appeared to me very reprehensible, and I said, ' Liston, O thou greedy fellow ! what sort of a *faqir* art thou, that dost not know the meaning of the three letters of which the word فقر (poverty) is made up ? A *faqir* ought to act up to them.' He answered ' Well, generous soul, do you explain them yourself.' I said, ' from *fe* comes *faka* (fasting), *kaf* stands for *kanait* (contentment) and *re* signifies *riyazat* (devotion) ; whoever does not possess these qualities is no *faqir* in the proper sense of the word. All this which thou hast received lay out in eating and drinking, and when it is spent come back to me, and take whatever more thou requirest. This charity is bestowed on thee to relieve thy immediate wants, and not for the purpose of hoarding. O avaricious creature ! from the forty doors thou hast received from me gold coins up to forty ; just count up the sum and see, by the rules of arithmetical progression, how many gold coins it makes ; and even after all this thy greed has brought thee back again through the first door. What will

thou do by amassing so much wealth! One who is a real *faqir* ought to think of the wants of the passing day; on the following day the Supreme Provider of necessaries will give him a fresh pittance. Now have some shame and modesty, have recourse to patience, and practise contentment; what sort of mendicity is this that thy spiritual preceptor has taught thee?

"On hearing these words of mine, the *faqir* became angry and annoyed, and, throwing down on the ground all that he had received from me, he said, 'Enough sir! don't lose your temper, but take back your charity, and keep it, and do not in future utter the word *generosity*. It is hard to be generous; you cannot as yet bear the weight of generosity; when indeed will you attain to the position which belongs to the generous, for you are as yet far from it. Know that the word سخی (Sakhi) is also made up of three letters; first act up to the meaning of those letters and then aspire to the name *generous*.' On hearing this, I felt uneasy and disturbed, and said, 'Well, holy sir, explain to me the meaning of these letters.' He answered, 'From *sin* comes *simai* (endurance); from *khe* is derived *Khauf-i-ilahi* (fear of God), and *ye* signifies *yad* (remembrance of one's birth and death). As long as one does not possess these three qualities, he should not talk of generosity; and the generous man holds such an elevated position that, though he be an evil-doer, yet he is the friend of his Creator, by virtue of generosity. This mendicant has travelled in different lands, but except the Princess of Basra, he has not come across any person who could be really called generous. God has fitted the robe of generosity on that woman; all others aspired to the name *generous* but do not act like a generous man.'

"On hearing this, I made much entreaty and conjured him in the name of all that was holy and sacred, to forget my reproaches, and take whatever he wanted; but he would, on no account, accept my gifts, and went away, muttering these words, 'If thou wert to give me the whole of thy kingdom now, I would not spit upon it; nay I would not even make water on it.' The mendicant went away, but, having heard the Princess of Basra spoken of in terms of such high praise, my heart became quite uneasy, and I could not enjoy any rest whatever. I longed to find out some means of transporting myself to Basra, and having a look at her.

"In the meanwhile, the King, my father, died, and I ascended the throne. I got the kingdom but the idea I had formed of visiting Basra still clung to me. I held a consultation with the ministers and nobles who were the stay and support of the throne, and the pillars of the

empire, saying I have a mind to undertake a journey to Basra. Do ye perform faithfully and zealously each his appointed duties ; if I live my journey will not last long,—I shall soon be back among you.' No one approved of my idea of going. I was thus driven to despair, and my heart became more and more dejected and sorrowful day by day. One day, without speaking or listening to anybody on the subject, I privately sent for my minister—a person of extraordinary resources, and, having vested him with the powers of a regent and plenipotentiary during my absence, I placed him at the helm of State (literally, made him the centre of the affairs of the empire). I then dressed myself in ochre-coloured garments, which the pilgrims usually wear, and, assuming the disguise of a mendicant, I bent my steps towards Basra, unattended and alone. In a few days I reached its confines ; and from this time forward I began to witness this scene : wherever I halted for the night, the servants of the Princess of Basra would come forward to receive me and, having made me put up in a comfortable house, would supply me, in the best manner possible, with all the necessaries of a banquet, and, with folded hands, remain in attendance upon me the whole night. The following day, at the next stage, the same reception would be accorded to me. In this comfort I journeyed on for months together. At last I arrived at Basra. I had scarcely entered it when a handsome young man, neatly dressed, very polite in his behaviour, from whose countenance intelligence beamed, came up to me, and, in accents that sounded unusually sweet to my ear, said, ' I am the servant of mendicants (or pilgrims) ; I am ever eager and anxious to conduct to my dwelling all the wayfarers be they mendicants or men of the world, who visit this city ; except my house there is no other place here for strangers to put up at ; please to accompany me, honour my abode with your presence, and make me exalted.'

" I asked him, ' What is the noble name of your honour ? ' He answered, ' they call the name of this obscure individual *Bedar Bakht*' Pleased with his good qualities and his affability I followed him and came to his house. The house I saw was a magnificent structure, fitted up in a princely style. He conducted me to a grand hall, and made me sit down there, and, having sent for warm water, he had my hands and feet washed. He then ordered the *dastarkhwan* (tablecloth) to be spread, and the butler set before me alone a great variety of trays and dishes. There were four kinds of dishes ; the first consisted of *gravy pulao* ;* the second of *pulao* prepared with delicious stew ; the third of mutton or fowl *pulao*, and the fourth of *pulao* mixed with boiled eggs.

and the gravy of meat. Moreover, there was a dish of sweet pulao ; meat of different kinds dressed with vegetables-rich stew made with clarified butter; onions, and meat biscuits resembling the *narcissus* in flavour; bread of different kinds made according to the baking system of *Bakir Khan** and *Tunki*;* bread prepared of flour kneaded in milk ; bread shaped like the eye of a cow ; long leaves like the tongue of a cow ; bread mixed with fried meat and made highly palatable ; bread so kneaded and baked, as to come out in slices thinner than paper ; minced meat ; small fragments of roasted meat ; omelet male of fowl ; spiced meat of lambs ; turnipped meat cooked all night ; pastry of fowl meat ; barley pudding prepared with milk ; thick pottage made of crushed wheat ; meat ; clarified butter, cinnamon, and aromatic herbs ; small pastry of minced meat, triangular in form ; leafy bread, dish made of pulse and rice ; rice pudding ; dish prepared of rice and milk cooked together ; cream tart ; pudding made of clarified butter ; flour and milk flummery ; boiled rice, kept in water ; whipt cream ; *sharbat* cooled in saltpetre ; double bread ; almond sweetmeats ; preserves and small glasses filled with curds. On seeing such a host of dainties, my very soul was satiated. I took a morsel from each and my stomach was completely filled. I then left off eating (*literally*, drew back my hand from eating). The young man pressing me said, 'Sir, what have you eaten ? The dinner all remains untouched ; please eat something, and don't stand on ceremony.' I answered, 'There is no shame in eating ; may Heaven prosper your house ! I have eaten as much as my stomach can contain ; I cannot find words to adequately praise your entertainment, and even now my lips smack with its flavour, and every time I belch I exhale richly perfumed breath ; now pray let the dishes be taken away.' When the *dastarkhwan* was removed they spread a small embroidered carpet of *Kashan* velvet, brought to me ewers and a basin of gold and, having given me scented flour from a flour-pot, helped me to wash my hands with warm water. After this, they brought and placed before me, in a box set with precious stones, betel-leaves enclosed in leaves of gold, some more of the same stuff, prepared and all, in a box with four compartments, as well as boiled betel-nuts and cardamoms and cloves, wrapped up in leaves of silver. Whenever I asked for water to drink, the servants brought it and cooled it in ice. When the evening set in, camphorated candles were lighted in glass shades, and that hospitable young man taking his seat near me, entertained me with his pleasant conversation. When a quarter of the night had passed away, he said to me, 'You will now please go and sleep in the bed

* Two famous bakers.

yonder, hung with curtains and screens.' I said, 'O Sir, for us mendicants a mat or a deer-skin is sufficient for a bed, such luxuries God has made for you men of the world.' He replied, 'All these things are for pilgrims and mendicants, and I have absolutely no claim to them.' On his pressing me, I went and lay down on the bed which, in point of softness, surpassed even a bed of roses. On both sides of the bedstead rose-pots and baskets of flowers stood nearly arranged, and aloes and other perfumes in censers were burning. To whichsoever side I turned, my sense of smell was intoxicated with fragrance; in this state I slept. When the day broke, the servants brought and placed before me, for breakfast, almonds pistachio nuts, grapes, figs, pomegranates, raisins, dates and *sharbet* prepared from fruit. In this ease and comfort I passed three days and nights. On the fourth, I begged leave to depart. The young man said, with folded hands, 'Perhaps I have been remiss in my attentions to you, for which reason you are dissatisfied.' I was astonished and said, 'For God's sake what speech is this? The recognized term of hospitality is only three days, and that period I have stayed with you; to remain long would not be proper. Moreover, I left my home for the purpose of travelling; if I stay in one and the same place, it would not be right; for this reason, I beg leave to depart; otherwise your qualities are such that my heart does not like to be separated from you.' He then said, 'Do just as you please; but pray, wait a moment that I may go to the Princess and make her acquainted with the matter; as you are bent upon departing, know that all the wearing apparel and bedding, and all the vessels of gold and silver, as also the jewelled plates, in this guests' apartment belong to you; whatever instructions you may give as regards the carrying away of the same with you, an arrangement to that effect will be made.' I said, 'Pray, don't talk in that way. I am a mendicant and not a strolling bard; if I had been such an avaricious and greedy creature, why should I have turned mendicant? What was there wrong in a worldly life?' The kind-hearted young man replied, 'Should the Princess come to hear of this circumstance of your refusal, she will dismiss me from her service, and Heaven knows what other punishment she will inflict upon me; if you are so indifferent as to possessing these articles then lock them up all in a room and put your seal on the door thereof so that you may afterwards dispose of them as you like.'

"I would not agree to his proposal, and he would not yield to me. There being no other alternative, this plan was at last adopted: I locked them all up in a room,

and having put my seal on the door, impatiently waited for leave to depart. In the meanwhile a respectable looking eunuch, having an aigret on his head, and a short robe round his waist, and a jewelled mace of gold in his hand, attended by several attendants, filling suitable offices, approached me with great pomp and splendour, and addressing me in a tone of kindness and affability, bound to be done justice to, said, 'O Sir, if you would be so kind and generous as to do me the favour to exalt my humble abode by the blessings of your feet, it would not be far from courtesy and condescension, indeed it would be laying me under debt immense of endless gratitude. Perhaps the Princess will hear that a pilgrim had been here, and no one gave him a kind and courteous reception; and that he had gone away just as he came; for this reason God knows what misfortune she may cause to befall me, and what trouble she may involve me in; indeed I am afraid, I shall stand in risk of losing my very life.' I declined his hospitality but, through dint of entreaties and solicitations, he prevailed upon me to accept his invitation, and led me to another house, which was better than the first. Like the former host, he treated me twice a day for three days and nights running, to the same choice articles of food, and in the morning and afternoon he gave me *sharbet* to drink, and for tiffin, he fed me on fruits; and he informed me that all the rich gold and silver dishes, carpets, &c., which were in my apartment, were my property, and that I was at perfect liberty to dispose of them in whatever way I pleased.

" On hearing this announcement I was wonder struck, and wished to secure leave to depart as early as possible and to steal away unnoticed. On perceiving my embarrassment the eunuch said, 'O creature of God, whatever thy wishes or desires may be communicate the same to me, so that I may lay them before Her Highness. I answered, ' In the habit of a mendicant how can I desire worldly riches, which you offer me without my wishing for them, and which I refuse ?' He said, The desire of worldly riches has never been absent from any body's mind, for which reason some poet has composed the following verses :—

I have seen devotees with nails unparted :
 I have seen ascetics with hair thickly matted ;
 have seen *jogis* with their ears split, and with bodies ~~essmear-~~
 ed with ashes
 I have seen *munies* who never open their lips ;
 I have seen *sinros* with heads shaved, and sporting in the
 forest of *Khandt* ;
 have seen bold warriors and heroes ;
 I have seen the learned and the unlearned all ;
 I have seen victims of delusions, forgetful of everything midst
 their riches ;
 I have seen those who were happy from first to last ;
 I have seen those who were unhappy from their birth ;
 But never have I seen persons whose minds were above the
 influence of avarice.

On hearing these lines I said, ‘What you say is true, ‘but I stand in want of nothing ; if you will permit me, I will write and give you a letter duly sealed, which you will please convey to the Princess ; if you oblige me in this, you would be bestowing upon me, as it were, the riches of the whole world. The eunuch said, ‘I shall be most happy to do your bidding ; there is no harm in that.’ I immediately penned a note to the following effect ; I commenced it with the praise of God ; after that I entered into an account of my circumstances and situation saying, ‘I, a humble creature of God, arrived in this city some days ago ; and every attention has been shown me by Government ; I heard such accounts of Your Highness’s generosity and munificence as created in me an intense desire of seeing you ; and I have found these qualities fourfold greater than they were represented to me. Your nobles now tell me to represent to you whatever wants or wishes I may have ; for this reason, I make bold to lay before you the wishes of my heart without any reserve. I do not want the riches of this world, for I, too, am the king of my own country ; my sole reason for coming such a long distance and undergoing such hardships was my love for you, and it is this which has brought me here in this manner, unattended and alone. I hope that I may now, through Your Highness’s favour, attain the wishes of my heart ; I deserve the favour I ask ; but, of course, Your Highness is the best judge in the case. But if the request of the unfortunate me is not complied with, I will wander about like a maniac encountering all sorts of hardships, and sacrifice this restless life at the shrine of your love. Like *Majnoon* or *Farhad** I will terminate this miserable existence of mine in some forest or mountain.’

Having thus written my wishes, I gave the letter to the eunuch, who carried the same to the Princess. In a few moments he returned and called me, and took me to the ante-chamber of the palace. On arriving there, I saw an elderly woman—a learned person—wearing jewels and ornaments, seated on a golden stool, and many eunuchs and attendants, dressed in rich clothes, were standing before her with joined hands. Thinking her to be the superintendent of affairs, and regarding her as a venerable person, I saluted her respectfully. The ancient dame acknowledged my salute very graciously, and said, ‘Come and sit

* *Farhad*, a mad lover of Eastern Romance, perished for his sweetheart *Shirin*. *Majnoon*, as has already been noticed, was the lover of *Laili*; he pined himself to death for his cruel mistress.

down ; you have done well to come ; is it you who wrote a love-letter to the Princess ?' I felt ashamed, hung down my head, and sat in silence. After a moment she said, O young man, the Princess has sent you her compliments, and said, 'There is no harm in my taking a husband ; you have asked my hand in marriage ; but to make mention of your kingdom and to consider yourself a king in this mendicity, and to be proud of it is highly improper, since all men are certainly each other's equal, though of course, superior consideration ought to be due to those who prefer the Muhammadan religion. I also have long been desirous of marriage and as you are indifferent to worldly riches, even so am I, for God has bestowed upon me an amount of wealth to which no limits can be set. But there is one condition, an , that is that you first pay the marriage gift ' The marriage gift of the Princess,' added the old lady, ' is a certain task to perform, if you can accomplish it.' I answered, ' I am ready to do anything ; I shall not hesitate to spend all my wealth, nay to lay down my very life in the attempt to carry through the undertaking. What does she want me to do ? let me hear it.' She then said, 'Stay here to-day, and to-morrow I will let you know all about it.' I gladly assented and, taking my leave, I came out.

" On the following day, when the evening had set in, a eunuch waited upon me, and conducted me to the palace. On entering it, I saw that the nobles, the learned, the virtuous, and men well-versed in religious law, were present there. I also joined the assembly and sat down. In the meantime, the cloth for supper was spread, and eatables of various kinds, both sweet and salted, were served They all commenced eating, and with courtesy invited me to join them When the repast was over, a female servant came out from the interior of the palace, and said, ' Where is Bahroz ? call him.' A servant in attendance brought him instantly. He had a gentlemanly appearance, and many silver and gold keys were suspended from his girdle. After bidding me the time, he took his seat near me. The same female attendant said, ' O Bahroz ! whatever thou hast seen, relate it in detail to this stranger.' Bahroz, addressing himself to me, commenced the following narration. ' O friend ! this Government, of which our Princess is the head, possesses thousands of slaves, who are engaged in commercial pursuit ; among them I am one of the lowest of her hereditary servants. She sends them to different lands with goods and merchandise, worth hundreds of thousands of rupees, of which they have the charge. When they come back from the countries, to which they were severally sent for the purpose of trading, the Princess, sum-

moning them in her presence, questions them as regards the state and manners of those countries, and hears what they have to say. Once it so happened that this humblest of her slaves went to the city of *Nimroz** to trade.

' On reaching the city, he found that the citizens were all dressed in black and that they devoted their whole time and leisure to sighing and weeping. It appeared to me that some great misfortune had befallen them. From whomsoever I inquired the reason of this, I had to go without an answer, for nobody would give me any information on the subject. One day, as soon as the morning dawned, all the inhabitants of the city, small and great, young and old, poor and rich, thronged forth from the city. They went and assembled on a plain, and the king of the country also went there, mounted on horse-back, and attended by all his chiefs and nobles. The multitude formed themselves into a regular line, and stood perfectly still. I also stood among them to witness the novel sight, for it was evident that they were all waiting for some one's arrival. In an hour's time, a handsome youth, the child of a fairy, some fifteen or sixteen years old, uttering loud cries, and foaming at the mouth, riding a dun bull, and holding something in one hand, approached from a distance, and coming in front of the line alighted from his bull. Holding the nose-string of the bull in one hand and a naked sword in the other, he sat down on the ground. There was a rose-bodied, fairy-faced attendant with him; the young man gave him that which he held in his hand; the attendant, taking it, showed it to every body from one end of the line to the other, but such was the nature of the object displayed that whosoever beheld it, could not help gnashing his teeth and weeping aloud at the sight. Having in this manner shown it to one and all, and made everybody weep, he passed along the front of the line and came back to his master.

' The moment the attendant approached him, the young man got up, cut off his head with his sword, and having again mounted his bull, rode away in the direction from which he had come. All present stood looking on. When he had vanished from their sight, they returned to the city. I was eagerly asking everyone I came across the meaning of this strange occurrence. Nay, I held out to them the temptation of money and entreated and flattered them to give me an explanation, saying 'Let me know who this young man is, why he has committed the deed I have seen, whence he came and whither he has

* *Nimroz* comprehends the eastern parts of Persia and *Mekran*. One of the genii of Solomon changed it from sea to land in *half a day*, and hence the name. Such is the tradition.

gone.' But nobody would deign to let me into the secret, nor could I myself find out a solution of the mystery. When I returned from my journey, I related to the Princess the extraordinary sight I had seen. From that very moment the Princess has been in amazement, and extremely desirous to have the mystery unravelled. It is on account of this that she has fixed it as her marriage-portion, that whoever will bring her a true and satisfactory account of this strange circumstance, she will bestow on him her hand in marriage and he shall be the master of all her riches, her dominions and herself.'

" Bahroz concluded by saying, ' You have now heard every circumstance, reflect in your mind if you can bring the information required regarding the youth; if you can, then make up your mind to proceed towards the country of *Nimroz*, and set out as early as possible, but if you cannot, then let your answer be in the negative, and your business to return home '

" I replied, ' If it please God, I will soon ascertain all the facts connected with the strange event, and returning to the Princess attain the wishes of my heart; but if my luck be bad, then there is no help for it; the Princess, however, should pledge to me her royal word that she will not back out from what she engages to perform. And now an anxious thought is afflicting my soul; if the Princess would, out of kindness to the poor, condescend to call me before her, and permit me to sit down before the screen and hear with her own ears the request I have made, and give me an answer with her own lips, then my heart will be at ease, and I shall be ready to attempt everything' This request of mine, the female attendant conveyed to the angelic Princess. At last being gracious, she desired that I should be brought before her.

" The same female attendant returned, and led me to the apartment where the Princess was. The sight that met my eyes, was superb. Beautiful female slaves and servants, and armed attendants from *Kilmak*, *Turkistan*, *Abyssinia*, *Uzbak*, *Tartary* and *Kashmir*, stood in a line on either side, adorned with jewels, with their hands folded, and each standing at his appropriate post. Shall I give it the name of the Court of *Indra*, or was it a descent on the part of fairies? An involuntary sigh of ecstasy escaped from my heart, and my heart commenced throbbing, but I controlled myself by a powerful effort. Gazing at them all around I moved on; but my feet became each as heavy as a hundred maunds. Whenever I cast my eyes on anyone of those charming creatures, my heart was reluctant to advance. On one side of the apartment a screen was suspended and a jewelled stool was placed near it, as also a chair of

sandalwood. The female attendant motioned me to sit down on the stool set with precious stones, and she herself took her seat on the *sandalwood* chair. Then she said, ‘ Now whatever you have to say, speak it out fully and without reserve.’ I first praised the good qualities of the Princess, as well as her justice and her munificence ; I then added, ‘ Ever since I have entered the confines of Your Highness’s territory, I have seen at every stage comfortable lodging for wayfarers and strangers and lofty structures, and have found everywhere attendants of every rank and grade appointed to look after travellers and needy persons. I have likewise passed three days at every resting-place, and on the fourth day, when I wished to take my leave, nobody willingly gave me permission to depart, and whatever things happened to be in the apartment wherein I put up at any particular stage—such as *spotted carpets, white carpet cloths, wool carpets, cool mats, carpets manufactured in India, wall-tapestry, ceiling cloths, screens, canopies, awnings, bedsteads with covers, wrappers, quilts, counterpanes, bed-covers sheets, pillows, tiny pillows, pillows for the cheek, cushions, bolsters, large and small cooking pots, pans, kneading vessels, plates, bowls salvers, spoons, ladles, skimming-ladles, big spoons for serving out food, covers, trays, traylids, tray covers, drinking cups, vessels for holding hot water, flagons, basins, beetle-holders, boxes with four compartments, flower-pots, bottles for rose-water, censers for burning aloes in, ewers, wash-hand basins,—all these the host declared were mine, saying, ‘ This is your property ; you may take it away if you like or lock it up in a room ; and put your seal on the door ; on your return, you may, when it suits your pleasure, have it removed to wherever you please.’ I have done this, but I am really surprised when I think that, when such a princely reception has been given to an humble mendicant like myself, the same must be the treatment accorded to each and every one of the thousands of such mendicants that visit your dominions. If such be the case, and every pilgrim is received in the grand style in which I have been received, then incalculable sums must be spent. Now, whence comes the enormous wealth which is expended so lavishly and of what nature is it ? The treasures of *Krah* (*Kárun*) himself would not suffice to meet such extraordinary expenditure ; and if we look at the dominions of the Princess, they are so small that their revenue would not be sufficient to defray the kitchen charges, let alone the other expenses. If the Princess would deign to explain this mystery with her own lips, I shall then, with my mind set at ease, start for the country of *Nimroz* and reaching there as best I can and having found out all the particulars connected with the strang*

circumstance, I will, if Heaven spare me, return to the presence of the Princess, and obtain the wishes of my heart.' On hearing these words the Princess herself said, 'O young man, if you have a strong desire to be enlightened on what seems to you so mysterious, then stay here to-day also. I will send for you in the evening, and every circumstance connected with this inexhaustible wealth will be related to you without any resistance.' Having received this assurance, I came back to my place of residence, and waited impatiently for the return of the evening, for I was burning with the desire to have my curiosity gratified. In the meanwhile, the eunuch brought some square and covered trays on the heads of porters, and, laying them before me, said, 'Her Highness has sent you a dinner from her own table ; partake of it.' When he removed the coverings off the trays, the rich fragrance of the dishes intoxicated my sense of smell, and my very soul became satiated. I ate as much as I could, and sent away the rest, and returned my grateful thanks to Her Highness. At last, when the sun, the traveller of the whole day, wearied and exhausted with his journey, reached his lodgings, and the moon, in company with her associates, emerged from her palace, the same female servant came to me and said, 'Follow me Her Highness has sent for you.' I went along with her she conducted me to the private saloon ; the effect of the brilliant light was so grand that *Shab-i-Kadr** was nothing compared to it. An embroidered *masnad* was placed on rich carpets with a pillow adorned with precious stones, over it a canopy with a fringe of pearls was supported on jewelled poles, and in front of the *masnad*, various trees made of jewels, with flowers and leaves attached (which had all the beauty and freshness of nature's own productions) were studded in beds of gold ; and on the right and left handsome slaves and servants were in attendance, with their hands folded across, and downcast eyes, in respectful attitude. Dancing-girls and female singers, with their musical instruments tuned, were in waiting, ready to begin their performance. On beholding this scene, and such splendid preparations, my senses forsook me. I said to the female servant who came with me, 'There is here such extraordinary splendour during the day, and such astonishing magnificence during the night, that the day may fitly be called *I'd* and the night the *Shab-i-barat*,—indeed not even a king, whose rules extended over the whole world, could display greater splendour and magnificence.

* *Shab-i-Kadr*, a festival, which falls on the 27th of Ramzan It is called *laaltul Kadar* by the Arabs. According to the *Muhammadans* it was the day on which the Quran was sent down from heaven.

Is it always so at the Court of Her Highness ? The female attendant answered, ‘The Princess’s Court ever exhibits the splendour and magnificence you see now, there is no difference except that the scene is grander and still more overpowering ; do you sit down here ; the Princess is in another saloon. I will go and tell her that you are come.

“Saying this, the nurse departed, and, soon returning, desired me to come to the Princess. I had scarcely entered her apartment when I was utterly confounded. I could not tell where the door was and where the wall, for the place was covered all around with Aleppo mirrors of the height of a man the frames of which were set with diamonds and precious stones. The reflection of one fell on the other, and it seemed as if the entire apartment was studded with jewels. On one side a screen was hung, behind this screen sat the Princess. The nurse (female attendant) sat down close to the screen, and desired me also to take my seat. After this the nurse, by the orders of her royal mistress, commenced the following narrative :—

“Listen, O intelligent youth ! The Sultan of this country was a powerful monarch ; he had seven daughters born to him. One day, the King held a festival, and these daughters were standing before him, richly attired, with each sixteen jewels, twelve ornaments, and wearing on each hair an elephant pearl. Something came into the King’s mind, he looked at his daughters and remarked, ‘If your father had not been a King, and you had been born in the house of some poor woman, who would have called you *King’s daughters* and *Princesses*? Praise God that you are Princesses ; your happiness and well-being depends entirely on my life.’

“Six of his daughters unanimously replied. ‘What the Protector of the World says is true, and our welfare is bound up with Your Majesty’s safety.’ But the Princess in whose presence you are now sitting, though she was younger than all her sisters, yet she surpassed them all in point of sense and intelligence, even at that tender age. She remained silent and did not join her sisters in the reply which they made, the reason being that what her sisters had said bordered on infidelity. The King regarded her angrily and observed, ‘Well, madam, you say nothing, what is the cause of this ?’ The Princess, tying both her hands with a handkerchief, humbly replied, ‘If Your Majesty will grant me my life and pardon my presumption, this humble slave will speak out the thoughts of her mind.’

“The King said, ‘Speak freely what thou hast to say.’ Then the Princess said, ‘Sovereign of the world, you must

have heard that truth is unpleasant and bitter ; hence, jeopardising my life at this moment, I make bold to address Your Majesty ; whatever the Supreme Writer has written in my fate, that no one can obliterate ; it must and will come to pass.

Verse.

Whether you bruise your feet by depending on your own exertions or bow your own head in prayer.

Your destiny which is written on your forehead must come to pass.

“ ‘ The Omnipotent King who has made you a sovereign the same has also made me a Princess. At His Omnipotent Court no one has power You are my benefactor, and the object of my respect and veneration. I should make the dust of Your Majesty’s blessed feet collyrium for my eyes, it would only be proper ; but the destiny of every one is one’s own. ‘ On hearing this word the king was transported with rage ; the reply was extremely distasteful to him, and he exclaimed, ‘ A little mouth and big words are inconsistent. As a punishment for that she has said let her be stripped off the jewels she has on her hands and feet, and let her be placed in a litter and left in such a wilderness where no trace of a human being is to be found ; then we shall see what is written in her fate.’

‘ ‘ In obedience to the King’s orders, that same day at midnight, when everything was enveloped in utter gloom the Princess, who had been brought up in the lap of luxury and had never seen any place except her own apartments, was conveyed by the porters in a litter and set down in a plain where not even a bird had ever flapped its wings, to speak of its ever having been visited by a human being is out of the question ; they left her there and returned. The state of the Princess’s mind can be better imagined than described ; what was her state a moment ago, and what had it become now ! Then at the threshold of God she returned thanks and said, ‘ Thou art so mighty, O Lord that what Thou hast willed Thou hast done ; and whatever Thou willest Thou dost, and whatever Thou mayst will, Thou wilt do ; as long as there is breath in my nostrils, I shall not despair of Thy mercy and protection.’ With her mind filled with such thoughts she fell asleep. When the day broke, the eyes of the Princess opened ; she called for water to perform her ablutions. Then all of a sudden the events of the last night came to her recollection and she said to herself, ‘ Where art thou and where this speech ?’ Saying this, she got up, performed her ablutions with sand,* repeated her prayers, and thanked and praised her Creator from the fullness of her heart. O youth ! the heart is torn

* Tayammam means, purifying before prayer with sand or dust when no water is to be had.

with anguish to think of the state in which the Princess was at the time. Question that innocent and inexperienced soul what it suffered. In short, seated in the litter, and with her love fixed on her Maker, she repeated to herself at that moment the following Hindi verses :—

When I had no teeth, Thou gavest milk ;
 When Thou hast given me teeth, wilt Thou not give me food,
 He Who takes care of the birds of the air, and of all sentient creatures
 inhabiting the earth,
 He will also provide for thee.
 Why art Thou miserable, O foolish one !
 By being sorrowful, thou wilt gain nothing ;
 He Who feeds the fool, the wise, and the whole world, will likewise
 feed thee.

“ ‘ True it is that when no resource is left, God is remembered, or every one in his own conceit looks upon himself a veritable *Lugman*,* and a *Bu Ali Sina*.† Now listen to the inscrutable ways of God. In this manner three days and nights clear passed away, and during this period not even a parched grain of corn entered the mouth of the Princess ; her body, which was soft and fresh as the rose, became as withered as a thorn, and her colour, which used to glitter like gold, became yellow as turmeric, her mouth became rigid, and her eyes were petrified, but a feeble breath still remained, which came and went. Whilst there is breath there is hope. On the morning of the fourth day a hermit appeared on the scene.

“ ‘ He had a bright countenance, resembled *Khizar*‡ in appearance, and was a person of enlightened mind. Seeing the Princess in that state he said, ‘ O daughter ! though thy father is a King, yet these misfortunes were written in thy destiny. Now look upon this old hermit as thy servant, and keep thy thoughts fixed on thy Maker day and night. God will do for thee that which is right,’ and whatever scraps of food were in the hermit’s wallet, the same he laid before the Princess, and began to look about for water. He saw a well, but where were the cord and bucket to draw the water with ? He plucked some leaves from a tree, made them into a cup, and with that, drawing out some water, gave it to the Princess and made her eat and drink something. At last, she regained her *senses* a little. That godly man, knowing her to be helpless and solitary, gave her every consolation, and set her mind at ease, and he himself began to weep also. When the Princess perceived that his sympathy and kindness were unbounded, she became easy in her mind. From that day the old man

* *Lugman*, a famous Eastern fabulist, supposed to be identical with the Greek slave *Aesop*.

† The famous Arab physician and philosopher.

‡ A Muhammadan saint. He is said to have discovered and drunk the water of immortality, and to be still living. He is supposed to wander

made it a practice, that in the morning he would go into the city to beg, and bring to the Princess whatever morsels or scraps of food he received.

" 'In this manner some days passed away. One day the Princess wished to put some oil in her hair and comb it; the moment she opened the plaits of her hair, a pearl, round and brilliant, fell out of her locks. The Princess gave it to the hermit, saying, 'Sell it in the city and bring me the amount.' He disposed of the pearl, and brought the sum it fetched to the Princess. Then the Princess expressed a wish that a house fit for her to live in might be erected on that spot. The hermit answered, 'Do you dig the foundations for the walls, and gather some earth; I will, one of these days, bring some water and prepare the required quantity of mortar, and build a room for you, according to the rules of architecture.' The Princess, acting up to the advice of the hermit, set to digging the ground; when she had dug to the depth of a yard, lo ! a door appeared under the soil. The Princess cleared away the earth which lay in front of it ; a large room filled with jewels and gold coins burst upon the view; she took four or five handfuls of gold coins and shut the door, and, having filled up the place with earth, made even its surface. In the meantime, the hermit arrived. The Princess said to him, 'Send for masons and architects—skilled masters of their craft—and workmen of every kind, expert of hand, who, in the shortest space of time possible, may build on this spot a palace, vying with the palace of *Khisro*,* and surpassing that of *Nu'man†*; and let the ramparts of the city, a fort, a garden, a large well and a house for travellers be constructed as early as possible but first of all draw out the plans correctly on paper and bring them to me for approval.'

" 'The hermit brought clever, skilful, experienced and intelligent workmen; and had them all ready to take up their duties at a moment's notice. The construction of the edifice commenced, in strict accordance with the instructions of the Princess, and intelligent and honest servants, having been selected and engaged, were placed in charge of different departments. The news of the erection of such magnificent buildings by and by reached the King, the shadow of God and the father of this Princess. On hearing it, he was much astonished, and asked every one, 'Who is this person who has commenced building such splendid edifices?' No one had any information on the subject to

* *Khisro*, the name generally given to *Nawsherwān*. It is a little of the Persian monarchs, and in Greek is spelt *Cyrus* and *Chasroes*. *cessar*, *Kai sar* and *Czar* are other forms of the same.

† *Niman*, the name of an ancient King of *Hirat*, in Arabia.

be able to give a reply. All placed their hands on their ears, saying, ‘None of your Majesty’s slaves knows who is the builder of these.’ Then the King sent one of his nobles with this message : ‘I wish to come and see these buildings and find out of what country you are the Princess, and of what family ; for I am extremely desirous of ascertaining all these circumstances.’

“ When this welcome message was communicated to the Princess, she was highly delighted and wrote the following letter in reply :

“ To the asylum of the world, peace and prosperity ! On hearing that Your Majesty intended to honour my poor house with a visit, I am infinitely rejoiced ; and it has been the cause of distinction and exaltation to me, the humblest of your slaves. Happy is the fate of that place where the marks of your auspicious feet are impressed and on the inhabitants of which the shadow of the skirt of your good fortune is cast ; may they both be exalted by look of your favour. The slave hopes that since tomorrow is a Thursday and hence a propitious day—indeed in my opinion, a more welcome day than the New Year’s Day—Your Majesty’s person, which is bright like unto the glorious sun, will, by deigning to come here, be gracious enough to bestow, through your own light, value and dignity on this insignificant slave and partake of whatever the humble slave can provide ; this will be the essence of condescension and benevolence to the poor, on the part of Your Majesty; to say more will exceed the bounds of respect.’ Having made some presents to the nobleman who had brought the message, she dismissed him with the foregoing reply. The King read the letter, and sent a word saying, ‘ I have accepted your invitation and will certainly come.’ The Princess ordered all her attendants and managers to have all the requisites of an entertainment prepared, with such taste and elegance, that the King, on seeing the dishes and partaking thereof, might be highly pleased, and that all who accompanied the King to the banquet, great and small, should be well feasted and return satisfied. In obedience to the Princess’s strict directions dishes of every kind, both salt and sweet, were prepared with such skill and were so toothsome that if a Brahman’s* daughter had tasted them she would have accepted the Muhammadan creed†. When the evening set in, the King went to the Princess’s palace seated on an uncovered throne, and the Princess, accompanied by her domestic

* Brahmins don’t eat meat.

† Literally, she would have repeated the Muhammadan confession of faith. The Kalma or confession of Faith is : There is no God but God and Muhammad is his Prophet.

attendants and ladies-in-waiting came forward to receive him. The moment she saw the royal throne, she made the obeisance with such propriety and respect that the King was still more astonished; with the same profound respect she advanced and, having conducted the King to a throne set with precious stones, she seated him thereon. The Princess had caused to be prepared a platform of one hundred and twenty-five thousand pieces of silver; a hundred and one trays of jewels, gold pieces, woollen stuffs, shawls, muslins, silk and brocade and two elephants, ten horses of *Irāq* and *Yamen* with jewelled caparisons, were also got ready as part of the intended present. Having presented all the things to His Majesty, she stood before him with her arms folded across. The King asked in a gracious tone, ‘ Of what country are you a Princess, and how have you come here ? ’

“ ‘ The Princess, after making her obeisance to the King, said ‘ This slave is the same guilty person, who, in consequence of the royal displeasure, was sent to this wilderness, and what Your Majesty now beholds with such astonishment has been brought about by the power of Him on High.’ On hearing this, the King’s blood glowed with paternal warmth; he forthwith got up and embraced her tenderly, and, having taken her by the hand and caused a chair to be placed near his throne, desired her to be seated thereon; but still he looked astonished and amazed at what he saw, and ordered that the queen, in company with the princesses, should come thither with all possible speed. When they all came, the mother and sisters recognized the Princess, and embracing her fondly, wept through joy and prayed to God. The Princess presented her mother and sisters with gold and silver in such immense quantities that the treasures of the world would not have come up to them in weight. After this, the King having seated them all with him, partook of the refreshments provided.

“ ‘ As long as the Protector of the world, the King, remained alive, time passed in this manner. Sometimes he would come to see the Princess at her palace, and sometimes he would carry her with him to his own royal quarters. When he was no more, the responsibility of administering the affairs of the kingdom devolved upon her, for, except her, no other person of the blood royal was fit for the office. O young man ! this is the history of the Princess that you have heard. In conclusion, let me observe that the wealth bestowed by Heaven never fails, only the intention of the recipient of heavenly bounty must be just; indeed as much as is spent out of this wealth, even to that extent there is increase in it; to be

wonder-struck at the power of the Omnipotent is not becoming in any religion.' The nurse, after having gone through the narrative, observed, 'Now, if you are still resolved to undertake a journey to the country of *Nimroz* and to bring an explanation of the strange circumstance, then set out as quickly as you can.' I replied, 'I am going this very moment, and, if it please God, I shall be soon back.' In the space of a year's time after undergoing various hardships I reached the city of *Nimroz*. All the inhabitants of that place that I saw, soldiers or merchants, noble or common were dressed in black, and whatever I had heard, that I now beheld with my own eyes. After some days the evening of the new moon arrived. On the first day of the month, all the citizens, great and small, children of varying ages, nobles, men and women, with their sovereign, assembled on an extensive plain. I, also, troubled and distracted and sinking under a load of misery went along with the immense multitude. Separated from my country and dominions, and dressed in the habit of a mendicant, I was standing to behold the strange phenomenon. 'Let us see,' said I to myself, 'what comes out of the hidden screen.' In the meantime, a young man approached from the wood mounted on a bull, foaming at the mouth, and roaring and shouting in a manner frightful to behold. The wretched I who had endured such hardships and faced so many perils and come all this way to fathom the mystery of the strange phenomenon, was utterly confounded on seeing the young man and stood dumb with astonishment, rooted to the spot. The young man, according to his usual custom, did what he used to do, and departed, and the inhabitants of the city, likewise, retraced their steps thither. When I recovered my senses, I then repented, saying to myself, 'What is this you have done, you will have now to wait one whole month again.' Seeing no other alternative, I came back along with the rest, and I passed that month like the month of *Ramzan** counting one day after another. At last, the new moon once more made her appearance, and was greeted by me as *I'd*.† On the first of the month, the King and the people again assembled on the plain, and I made up my mind not to let this chance slip me, saying within myself 'This time, happen what might, I would be resolute and unravel this mystery.' Suddenly the young man appeared, mounted, as usual, on a dun bull, which was saddled and all, and, alighting, squatted down on the ground; in one hand he held a naked sword, and in the other the nose-string of the bull; he handed over the vase to his attendant, who,

*The Muhammadan lent.

†The festival after the lent of *Ramzan*. This *I'd* is different from the *Al Kurban* or the *I'd* of sacrifice, celebrated in honour of Abrahams

according to custom, showed it to everybody and then took it back to his master. The concourse, having seen the vase began to weep, the young man broke the vase into fragments and dealt such a blow on the slave's neck with his sword, as to completely separate his head from his body, and himself, remounting the bull, dashed back again in the direction of the woods. I commenced running after him with all possible speed, but the people seized me by the arm, saying, 'What madness is this? Why are you knowingly rushing into the jaws of death; if you are sick of life, there are many other ways of dying, by which you may terminate your existence.' I begged and entreated them and even had recourse to physical force to get away somehow or other from them, but I could not release myself. Two or three men clung to me, and having made me their prisoner, led me back to the city. I had to wait another month, in a state of indescribable anxiety and unrest, to get another chance. When that month was finished also, and the last day of it had gone, all the city people, according to custom, again assembled on that identical plain, on the following morning. I, having got up at the hour of prayer, repaired alone and unperceived to the woods which lay right in the path of the youth and there concealed myself, saying to myself 'Nobody can here prevent me from carrying my plan into execution.' The young man came as usual, went through the process already referred to, remounted his bull, and was returning. I followed him and, by dint of running and unusual exertion, came up with him. From noise of my footsteps, the young man perceived that some one was following him. All of a sudden, he turned his bull's rein, growled, and threatened me then unsheathing his blade, advanced towards me, and was about to strike my head off. Bowing down with the utmost respect, I saluted him, and, with my hands folded across, I stood in silence. That person, thoroughly alive to the value of manners, restraining his hand, said, 'O mendicant! thou wouldst have been killed for nothing, but thou hast escaped; thou hast some more days to live; go from where thou hast come.' He drew from his waist a jewelled dagger, with pendants of pearls attached to it, and throwing it towards me said 'I have not at this moment any money to give thee; take this dagger to the King, and thou wilt get whatever thou askest.' I was so frightened and overawed by his looks that I lost all power of speech and motion: my utterance was choked, and my feet became heavy. After saying this, that high-spirited youth, roaring and shouting, went on. I said to myself 'Happen what might, I must go on, to remain behind now would be folly, for I shall never get such a chance again. Hence, having washed my hands of life*', I also went on. He

*That is, regardless of my life.

again turned round and threatened me in an angry tone, and appeared determined to put me to death. I bent down my head, and, conjuring him by all that was sacred, said, 'O Rustum* of the age, deal me such a blow with thy sword, that my body may be cleft clean in two; let not one single fibre remain joined on to the other; and let me be released from this pain and suffering; I pardon you my blood.' He answered, 'O Satan faced: why dost thou for nothing bring thy blood on my head, and make me criminal? Go thy way, art thou tired of life?' I did not mind what he said, but advanced; then he appeared not to notice me, and I followed him close. After we had gone some four miles, the wood terminated, and a square building came in sight. The young man went up to the door, and gave a terrible shout; the door opened of itself; he went in, and I was completely left outside. 'O God,' exclaimed I, 'what shall I do now?' I was bewildered and distracted. At last, after a while a slave came out, and brought this message. 'Walk in, he has summoned thee to his presence, possibly, the Angel of Death hovers over thy head, what evil fortune has befallen thee?' I answered, 'Verily, it is a piece of good fortune.' And saying this, I fearlessly followed him into the garden. At last he conducted me to the place where the young man was sitting. On seeing him I bowed to the ground; he made me a sign to sit down; I obeyed him; and sat down in a respectful posture. What did I see but that the young man was seated alone upon a cushion, with the tools of a goldsmith lying before him; he had just done making a branch of emeralds. When the time for him to rise up arrived all the slaves that were present before and around the royal seat, concealed themselves in different rooms; I too, through fear hid myself in a small room. The young man got up, and having fastened the chains of all the rooms, he went towards the corner of the garden, and commenced beating his riding-bull. The noise of its roaring reached my ears, and my heart began to palpitate with fear; but as I had endured all these hardships to unravel this mystery I forced open the door, though trembling with fear, and seeking the cover of the trunk of a tree, I stood and saw what was passing. The young man flung down from his hand the stick with which he had been beating, and unlocking a room, went in. Coming out immediately, he stroked the bull's back with his hand, and kissed its mouth and having fed it with grain and gram, he came in the direction of the tree, behind which I stood. On seeing this

* The Persian hero, whose exploits are celebrated in the *Shah Nama Fardusi*

I ran as fast as I could, and hid myself again in the apartment.

"The young man unfastened the chains of all the doors and all the slaves came out, bringing with them a small carpet, a wash-hand basin, and an ewer. Having performed his ablutions he stood up to pray ; when he had finished praying, he shouted out 'Where is the mendicant?' The moment I heard my name, I ran out and stood before him ; he desired me to sit down ; after saluting him, I sat down. Food was laid out ; he partook of it and gave me some, which I also ate. When the cloth was removed, and we had washed our hands, he dismissed his slaves, telling them to go and take some rest. When no one except ourselves remained in the room, he, addressing me, said 'O friend, what evil fortune has befallen thee that thou goest about seeking thy death ?' I gave him a detailed account of the adventures of my life from beginning to end, adding, 'By your favour, I have hopes of realizing my wishes.' On hearing this, he heaved a deep sigh, became utterly distracted, and began to say, 'O God ! who except thee is acquainted with the pangs of love ! he whose chillblain has not yet broken out, how can he know of the suffering of another ? He alone knows the intensity of this pain who is affected with it.'

Verse.

The torture of a lover you must ask from a lover,
Not of one who presends, but of a real lover.

"After a moment, becoming more composed, he heaved a heart-burning sigh ; the room resounded with it ; I was then convinced that he too was tortured with the pangs of love, and suffering from the same disease as myself. On this discovery, I mustered up courage, and said, 'I have related to you my history ; have the goodness to acquaint this slave with your adventures now ; I will then first of all assist you to the best of my power, and, by exerting myself to my utmost, obtain for you the desire of your heart.' In short, that true lover, regarding me as his confidante and fellow sufferer, began to relate his history in the following manner :—' Listen, O friend ! I, whose heart is tortured with anguish, am the prince of this country of *Nimroz*. The king, that is to say, my father, at my birth, assembled all the astrologers, fortune-tellers and wise men, and desired them to cast and carefully examine my horoscope, to fix my nativity and acquaint His Majesty in detail with whatever was to befall me every separate moment, hour, *pahar*, day, month and year of my life. They all came together in obedience to the royal order and, consulting together, they, with the assistance of the rules of their mystical science, discovered my future state and unanimously

said, ' By the blessings of God, the Prince has been begotten and born under such a lucky star and in such an auspicious hour, that he ought to vie with *Alexander* in the vastness of his dominions, and be as just as *Nawsherwan*. He will be, moreover, perfect in all the sciences and arts, and will easily carry through everything to which he applies his mind. In liberality and bravery, he will acquire such fame, that people will forget *Hatim* and *Rustam*; but till he reaches the age of fourteen he is exposed to great danger if he happens to see the sun or moon; indeed, it is to be feared that, becoming mad and insane, he will shed the blood of many, and, disgusted with human habitations, he will fly to the woods and seek the society of birds and beasts; strict orders therefore must be issued that he should not see the sun by day nor the moon by night; indeed, he should not be permitted even to look towards the sky. If these twice seven years pass away without danger and in safety, he will for the rest of his life reign in peace and happiness.'

' On hearing this forecast, the King laid the foundation of this garden, and caused many rooms of different kinds to be built in it. He ordered me to be brought up in a subterraneous apartment, and had it covered on the outside with a dome of felt, so as to wholly and completely shut out the light of the sun and moon. I, under the care of nurses, wet-nurses, waiting-nurses, midwives, and many other female attendants, began to be brought up in this magnificent structure, with every possible precaution and care. A wise and experienced tutor, who had a thorough knowledge of public affairs, was appointed to superintend my education, so that he might teach me every science and art, and make me perfect in the seven kinds of penmanship. The asylum of the world, my father, constantly looked after me, and a report of the occurrences of every moment was daily submitted to the King. I looked upon my place of residence as the whole world, and used to play with toys and various kinds of flowers; the delicacies of the whole world were provided for my food; whatever I desired, I had. By the time I was ten years of age, I had acquired every science and accomplishment.

' One day beneath the dome a wonderful flower from the sky-light came in view. It increased in size as I gazed upon it. I wished to lay hold of it with my hands; but when I stretched them towards it, it ascended and eluded my grasp. I was astonished at the phenomenon, and was regarding the flower with fixed attention when the sound of a loud laugh broke upon my ears. I raised my head to see whence it proceeded. Then I saw that face, bright and glorious as the full moon, having rent

the felt, was coming out. On beholding it, my reason and senses left me. When I came to myself, I looked up and saw a throne, studded with jewels, supported on the shoulders of fairies ; a person was seated on it, with a jewelled crown on her head, attired in a magnificent dress, and holding in her hand a ruby-cup, out of which she was drinking wine. The throne slowly descended from its height and came into the dome. The fairy called me and seated me beside her on the throne ; she began to talk to me words of love, and pressing her ruby lips to mine, made me drink a cup of rose-liquor and said, 'The race of man is faithless, but my heart is attached to thee.' The words she uttered were so endearing and captivating, that in a moment my heart was fascinated and the pleasure I experienced was so exquisite that I thought I had tasted the supreme joys of life, and had come into the world only *that day*.

'The result is my present wretched state ! but no one under the sun has ever seen or heard of such supreme felicity. In that ecstacy with our hearts at ease, we both were seated, when we were interrupted by an unlooked-for misfortune. Now listen to the unexpected circumstance which brought about this unhappy change. At the moment, four fairies descended from the sky and said something in that beloved one's ear. On hearing it her countenance changed, and she said to me, 'O my love ! I fondly wished to regale my heart by passing some moments in thy company and to repeat my visits in the same manner or to take thee with me. But this fate will not bear to see two persons like ourselves remain in one place in case and enjoyment ; adieu, my love ! may heaven be your protector.' On hearing these words, my senses forsook me, and my happiness escaped from my grasp. I exclaimed, 'O my darling, when shall we meet again ? What dreadful words are these that you have uttered in my hearing ! If you return quickly, you will find me alive, or else you will regret the delay. If you cannot come to me, tell me your name and the place of your residence, that, by following your directions and by dint of diligent search, I may find you out !' On hearing this she said, 'God forbid, you should make an attempt upon your life ; may Satan's ear be deaf ! may you live up to hundred and twenty* years ; if heaven spares us, we shall see each other again ; I am the daughter of the King of Genii, and I dwell in the mountain of *Kaf*.† Having said this, she made the throne ascend, and it

* According to the *Muhammadans*, the natural period of man's life is 120 years.

† According to the *Muhammadans*, the favourite home of genii and aijies, demons and other fabulous beings. *Kaf*, of course, is the *Caucasus* between the *Caspian* and the *Black Seas*.

ascended in the same way as it had descended.

‘ As long as the throne was in sight, our eyes were rivetted on each other ; but when it had vanished from sight, my state became such as if the shadow of a fairy had fallen upon me ; a strange sort of gloom and distraction seized hold of my mind ; my reason and senses fled ; and the world appeared dark in my eyes. Bewildered and confounded I wept bitterly, threw dust over my head, and tore my clothes ; I became totally indifferent to food and drink, and wholly regardless of good and evil.

Verse.

What various evils arise from this love ! .

It is the fruitful source of sorrow and anxieties.

‘ The nurse and my tutor soon became aware of my miserable plight : with fear and trembling, they went before the King and said, ‘ Such is the state of the Prince that we are totally at a loss to understand how this calamity has unexpectedly and of itself befallen the Prince ; it has made him give up rest, food, drink and all.’ On hearing these sorrowful things, the King at once came to the garden, which was my place of residence, attended by the Prime Minister, the wise and intelligent chiefs, skilful physicians, expert astrologers, clever *Mullas* and holy devotees, with minds wholly abstracted from worldly affairs. On seeing my restlessness, weeping, and lamentations, his mind became also distracted ; his eyes filled with tears, and with fond affection he pressed me to his bosom, and issued orders for my proper treatment. The physicians wrote out prescriptions, calculated to impart strength to my heart and remove the disorder of my brain, and the pious devotees wrote out charms and amulets, some to be washed off in water and drunk off and others to be worn on my person, and, having each muttered the formulae of exorcism, they began to blow upon me. On the other hand, the astrologers affirmed that my misfortunes were due to the revolution of the stars, and they advised the giving of alms to the poor, so that its effects might be neutralised. In short, every one was consulted according to his science ; but what was passing within me, my heart alone knew and suffered. Nobody’s assistance or remedy could prevail against my evil fortune ; day by day my insanity gathered strength, and my body grew weaker and weaker through want of nourishment. My days and nights passed in shrieking and moaning. Three years rolled away in this state. In the fourth year a merchant, who was travelling abroad, arrived, and brought with him into the presence of the asylum of the world (my father) rarities and curiosities —all articles of singular beauty and value—of different countries. He was accorded a gracious reception.

'The King treated him with great kindness and, after inquiring into his health, said, 'You have seen many lands, have you anywhere come across a truly skilful physician, or heard of such from any one ?' The merchant replied ; 'Sovereign of the world ! this slave has travelled much ; in the middle of the Ganges river in *Hindustan*, there is a small hill ; there an ascetic, with matted hair, has built a large temple to *Mahadev*,* together with a place of worship and a garden of considerable beauty ; in this mountain island he lives ; and it is a custom that once a year on the festival of *Shivratt* he comes out of his abode, swims in the river and enjoys himself. When, after bathing he is returning to his dwelling, the sick and afflicted of every clime and country, who come there from a distance, assemble at his door and there a great crowd is formed.

'The ascetic, who ought to be the *Plato* ‡ of the times goes along this line examining the urine and feeling the pulse of each individual, and giving each a prescription. God has bestowed on him such a healing power that the moment his medicines are taken, they manifest their effects and entirely root out the disease. These circumstances I have witnessed with my own eyes, and I have wondered at the power of God, who has created such beings.

'If it be Your Majesty's desire we will conduct and show the Prince of mankind to that wonderful man ; I have a strong hope that he will soon be perfectly cured ; moreover, the scheme has its own good points, which are apparent enough : when the Prince breathes the air of different places and feeds upon the food and drink of different countries, through which we shall pass, he will regain his former cheerfulness of spirit.' The King approved of the merchant's advice, and said, 'Very good ! perhaps the holy man's treatment may be successful, and this gloom may be dispelled from my son's mind.' He appointed a trusty, experienced nobleman, who had seen the ups and downs of the world, together with the merchant to attend me, and furnished me with everything required. Having seen us with our baggage embark on boats of every variety, pinnares, barks in the form of a peacock, barges for carrying goods, fly-boats, pleasure boats, baggage boats and flat bottom cargo boats he dismissed us. Steering along stage by stage, we at last arrived at the place where the holy

* One of the Hindu Trinity, the creative Power, whose sign is Lingam

† A Hindu festival, celebrated in honour of Shiva on the 14th of the dark fortnight of the month of Magh.

‡ According to the Muhammadans, Plato was a philosopher as well as a physician.

man lived. From inhaling fresh air, and by living on a different diet, my mind became somewhat composed ; but my silence left me not, and I wept constantly. Nor for a moment could I banish the memory of that beloved fairy from my mind. If I ever spoke it was to repeat this verse :—

I know not of what fairy-faced one I have encountered the glance ;
I know this that my heart was tranquil and sound but a moment ago.

'At last, when two or three months had gone by, nearly four thousand patients assembled on the mountain, and all said 'If it pleases God, the holy man will soon come out of his dwelling, and give us his advice, and we shall be restored to perfect health.' In short, when the morning of the appointed day arrived, the ascetic emerged from his abode in all the splendour of the sun, and bathed and swam in the river. Having gone across to the other side, he returned and rubbed the ashes of cow-dung over his body, and concealed his fair form like a live coal under the ashes. He then made a mark with the sandal of the Malay mountains on his forehead, put on his *langoti*, threw a towel over his shoulders, tied up his long hair into a knot, twisted his mustaches, and put on his high-heeled shoes. It was evident from his looks that the whole world had no value in his eyes. Having put a jewelled inkstand under his arm, and regarding each patient attentively in turn, he gave them prescriptions, and at last came to me. When our eyes met, he stood still, remained plunged in thought for a moment, and then said to me, 'Follow me.' I went along with him.

'When he had finished with all the rest he conducted me into the garden, and, then leading me into an elegant and richly ornamented closet, said, 'Do you take up your quarters here,' and himself went to his abode. When forty days had passed away, and he found me better than what I was before, he then, smiling, said, 'Amuse yourself by walking about in this garden.' And he gave me a small China box filled with electuary, adding, 'Take regularly every day six *mashas** from this box every morning, before breakfast.' Saying this he went away and I followed strictly his directions. I began to feel stronger and stronger daily, and my mind became more and more composed, but love was still triumphant ; the image of that fairy was ever present to my mind. One day my eyes lighted on a book in a recess in the wall ; I took it down, and saw that all the various sciences relating to religion, as well as to matters connected with the world were embodied in it. The author had, as it were, compressed an ocean into a vase. I forthwith commenced to read it and gave up a

* Nearly a quarter of an ounce.

my time and leisure to its study. I acquired great proficiency in the science of philosophy and in that of subduing the spirits. A year passed away in this study, and once more the same day of joy returned. The ascetic, having arisen from his devotional posture, came out of his dwelling. I saluted him ; he gave me his small writing-desk and said, ‘ follow me.’ I accordingly went along with him When he emerged from the gate, an immense crowd showered their blessings on him. The nobleman and the merchant, seeing me with the holy man in comparatively better health, fell at his feet and began to pour forth their thanks to him saying, ‘ By your holiness’s kindness at least this much has been effected.’ The ascetic went, according to his custom, to the *ghat* * of the river, had a bath and performed his devotions, as he used to do every year, and then returning from there he moved along the line of patients, attentively surveying and examining every one.

‘ It happened that among the group of lunatics a handsome and well-formed young man who, through weakness, had scarce strength to support himself on his legs, attracted the holy man’s attention Turning to me he said, “Bring him with you.” After having given recipes of cure to all, he sought his private apartment and, opening a little of the youthful lunatic’s skull, he wished to remove with his pincers a centipede which lay curled on his brain. An idea came in my head and I exclaimed, ‘ If you heat the pincers in the fire and then apply them to the centipede’s back it will be better, for it will then come out of its own accord, but if you try to pull it out in this way it will never give up its hold on the brain, and the life of the patient will be endangered.’ On hearing this the ascetic looked at me, and rising up in silence, he went, without saying a word, to a corner of the garden, where seizing a tree in his grasp he formed his long matted lock into a noose, threw it round his neck and hanged himself. When I went to the spot, I found to my intense regret that he was dead. I was extremely distressed at the painful sight; but having no other alternative, I thought it best to bury him. When I set about detaching him down from the tree, two keys fell out of his locks ; I picked them up and buried that treasure of excellence in the earth. Having possessed myself of the keys I began to apply them to every lock. By chance, they opened the locks of two of the rooms, and I saw that these were filled with jewels from the floor to the roof ; in one place I perceived a box, encased in a velvet covering, with clasps of gold, and locked. On open-

* A bathing place.

ing it I found that it contained a book in which was written the highest name of the Divinity,* and the mode of summoning genii and fairies, of subduing and holding intercourse with spirits, as also the way of charming the sun.

' I was overjoyed at the thought of having acquired such a treasure, and began to put the charms embodied in the volume in practice. I opened the garden door, and said to the nobleman and two others who came with me, " Send for the boats and load them with these precious stones, silver and gold, goods and books," and having myself embarked in a small vessel steered in the direction of the main ocean. Proceeding along I approached my native land. The asylum of the world was informed of my arrival. He mounted his horse and came forward to receive us ; with fond affection he pressed me to his bosom. I kissed his feet, and said, " May this humble person be permitted to live in the old garden." The King replied, " O my son, that place appears to be unlucky, and I have consequently stopped repairing and fitting it up, that place is not fit for the residence of a human being, take up your quarters in any other house you choose. You had best fix upon some place in the fort and remain under my eyes ; and having there laid out such a garden as you desire, amuse yourself by walking about and contemplating its beauties.' I strongly resisted the proposal, and insisted upon my going to the old garden, which I caused to be repaired anew, and having adorned it like a veritable paradise, I went to live in it. There I, at my ease, sat down to fast for full forty days, with the object of subduing the genii to my will ; and, having given up animal gratification, I began to practise my charm on the race of spirits.

' When forty days were completed, such a dreadful storm arose at the hour of midnight, that some of the largest buildings fell down, and the trees being torn from their roots were blown away and scattered in every direction, and an army of fairies appeared. A throne came down from the heavens, on which a person of stately appearance was seated, magnificently attired, with a crown of pearls on his head. On seeing him, I saluted him with great respect ; he returned my salutation and said, " O friend, why has thou raised this disturbance for nothing ? What dost thou require of me ? " I answered, " This unfortunate person has long been in love with your daughter, and for her he has wandered everywhere miserable and distracted, and, though apparently alive, he is in reality dead ;

* Ism-i-Azam.—One of the ninety-nine names of the Deity. It is the most exalted out of the whole. Pronouncing it gives, according to the Muhammadans, an absolute control over demons and spirits of all kinds.

he is tired of existence and has staked his life on the deed which he has done ; relying on Your Majesty's benevolence he is now in hopes that you will dignify the wretched wanderer with your favour and will confer on him life and happiness by permitting him to behold your charming daughter ; it will be a very meritorious act on your part."

' On being informed of this desire of mine, he said, " Man is made of earth, and we are made of fire ; connection between these two races is very difficult." I took an oath saying, " I simply desire to gaze on her charm and want nothing further." Again the occupant of the throne replied, " Man never abides by his promise ; in the hour of need he will pledge his word to anything, but he will not keep it in memory. I tell thee all this for thy good, for if thou makest any other attempt then both she and thou will be overwhelmed with ruin and disgrace ; indeed your very lives will be endangered." I repeated my oath a second time, saying, " I will never do aught that may do us harm ; all that I desire is that I may contemplate her beauties and graces." This dialogue was going on between us when, all of a sudden, the fairy, of whom we were talking, appeared before us attired in a magnificent dress and completely adorned ; and the throne of the sovereign of fairies vanished into space. I then clasped the fairy to my heart with fond eagerness, as though she were my life, and repeated this verse :

Why should not she, who has arched eye-brows, come to my house,
It is she for whose sake I have fasted forty days.

' In that delightful state, we lived together in the garden, through fear I never thought of other joys ; I only enjoyed the superficial pleasure of kissing her rosy lips, and constantly gazed upon her charms. The beautiful fairy, finding me so faithful to my word, was inwardly surprised, and she would now and then say, " O my darling ! You are indeed scrupulously loyal to your word, but, by way of friendship, I give you a piece of advice ; take good care of your book for the genii finding you off your guard will steal it off one of these days." I replied, " I guard it as I would my own life."

' It so happened that one night Satan tempted me ; overpowered by passion, I said to myself, " Come what may, how long can I control myself." I locked the lovely fairy in a fond embrace and attempted to revel in the fervid joys of love. Instantly, a voice came, saying, ' Hand over the book to me, for the great name of God is written in it ; do not show it disrespect.' In that fervour of passion, I was dead to every prudent consideration ; I drew out

the book from my bosom and handed it over to the person asking for it without knowing to whom I gave it, and plunged into the exquisite joys within the reach of a successful lover. The lovely fairy seeing this imprudence of mine, said, "Alas ! selfish man, thou hast erred at last and forgotten my advice."

' On saying this, she became insensible, and I saw a genie standing at the head of the bed and holding the mystical volume in his hand ; I made an effort to seize him and thrash him soundly, and snatch away the book from him by main force ; when in the meantime another appeared, took the book from his hand, and took to his heels. I began to repeat the charms I had learnt. The demon who was standing by the bed, was transformed into a bull but alas ! the fairy did not in the least come to her senses and the same state of insensibility continued. Then my mind became distracted and all my joys were turned into gall and wormwood. From that moment I became a misanthrope. I reside in a corner of the garden and for the sake of keeping my mind agreeably employed I prepare regularly, without fail, this emerald vase with branches and go every month to the plain mounted on a bull ; there I break the vase and kill the slave in the hope that every one may see my afflicted state, and pity me ; perhaps some servant of God may so far befriend me and pray for me that I may attain the wishes of my heart. O friend ! this is the tale of my madness and lunacy that I have related to thee.'

' When the young man had ceased speaking, my eyes filled with tears and I said ' O prince, you have truly suffered much from love, but I swear to you by Heaven that I will abandon my own wishes, and will wander through forests and over mountains for your sake and will do my utmost to restore you to your beloved mistress.' Having made this promise I took leave of the young Prince, and for full five years kept roaming in the desert, sifting the dust, like a lunatic, but nowhere could I find the least trace of the fairy. At last driven to despair I climbed up a mountain, and wished to throw myself headlong from its summit, so that not a single bone in my body should remain whole. The same veiled horseman who saved our brother from destruction appeared, and said, " Do not attempt suicide ; in a few days thou shalt gain the object of thy heart." "O holy men of God !" I have at last met you. Relying on the mercy of God I am now in hopes that joys and happiness are in store for us, and that all of us, though now miserable and afflicted, may attain our wished for objects.'

When the secon *darwesh* had likewise finished narrating the history of his adventures, the night came to a close, and the morning was about to dawn. The King Azad Bakht silently bent his steps towards his own royal abode. Having arrived at his palace, he said his prayers. After this he went and took his seat on his throne in the Public Hall of Audience, and said, ‘Four pilgrims have arrived at such and such a place; let a mace-bearer go and conduct them, with due respect, to our presence. In obedience to the order a mace-bearer departed to the place indicated, and saw that the four mendicants, after answering the calls of nature and performing their ablutions, were on the point of setting out on their wanderings, and take their respective roads. The messenger said to them, “Holy sirs, the King has called you four persons; please come along with me.” The four *darweshes* began to stare at each other, and said to the mace-bearer, “Son, we are the kings of our own hearts; what business have we with the kings of this world ?”

The mace-bearer answered, “Sirs, it does not matter; it is better if you come.”

The four *darweshes* then remembered that what Moula Murtaza had foretold them, had come to pass. They were joyed at the recollection, and followed the mace-bearer.

When they arrived at the fort and went into the King’s presence all the four mendicants blessed him, saying, “Son, may God give thee peace.” The King then adjourned to the Private Hall of Audience, and having summoned two or three of the confidential nobles there, he desired the four mendicants to be brought in. When the mendicants appeared before His Majesty, he desired them to take their seats and enquired after their health, saying, “Whence come you? Where do you mean to go, and where is the abode of your holinesses ?” They replied, “May Your Majesty’s age and wealth perpetually increase! We are mendicants, and have long been travelling and wandering about in this fashion; we carry our homes on our shoulders. There is a proverb, a mendicant’s home is where the evening overtakes him, and that all we have seen in this world of change is too long a story to relate.”

Azad Bakht gave them every consolation and encouragement, and having sent for something to eat, made them breakfast before him. When they had finished their repast, he said to them, “Relate to me your histery in detail; whatever services I can render you, I will not fail to perform.” The pilgrims replied, “Whatever we have

experienced in our adventurous life, we have not the strength to relate, nor will it afford the King any pleasure to hear it ; therefore excuse us." Then the King smiled and said, " At the place where seated on your beds last night, you were relating each the events of your past life, there I was likewise present. Moreover, I have already heard the adventures of two of you ; I now desire that the two, who remain would also relate theirs, and that you would stay with me some few days with your minds perfectly at ease, for *the footsteps of darwishes drive away evil.*"* On hearing these words from the King, they began to tremble through fear, and having hung down their heads, remained silent ; no power of speaking was left to them.

When Azad Bakht perceived that they were so overcome with fear as to have lost their senses and the power to tell anything, he said, to inspire them with confidence " There is no person in the world to whom incidents, and strange, have not occurred ; although I am King, yet I have seen strange things, which I will relate to you ; do you listen to them with your minds at ease." The mendicants said, " Peace be to thee ; since your kindness towards us pilgrims is so great, condescend to relate them."

HISTORY OF AZAD BAKHT.

Azad Bakht began his history, and said—

Listen O pilgrims, to the adventures of a king,
Listen whatever I have seen or heard ;
I will relate to you everything in detail,
Do you listen to my story with deep attention.

" When my father died, and I succeeded to the throne, it was in the very prime of life, and the whole of this country of Rum was under my sway. It happened one year that a merchant from the district of Badakshān came to the seat of my government and brought a good deal of merchandise. The royal reporters sent me intelligence to the effect that so great a merchant had never visited our city before. I summoned him into my presence.

" He came and brought with him curiosities of every land, which were worthy of being offered to me as presents. Indeed, every article appeared simply invaluable ; in particular, there was a ruby in a casket, of an exceedingly fine colour, of rare brilliancy, perfect in shape and size, and in weight five *mishkals*.† Though I was the master of

* A Persian proverb.

†A part of Khurasan. Rubies of great brilliancy and value are found in the chain of mountains lying to the east of it.

‡ A *mishkal* weighs four and a half *mashas*.

kingdom, I had never come across such a jewel, nor had ever heard of one like that from anybody. I took a fancy to it, and in return for it conferred upon the merchant honours and rewards adding, ‘ Throughout my kingdom nobody shall ask him any duties ; he shall be treated with kindness and respect wherever he goes ; he shall be waited upon by the servants of the crown, and shall have guards for his protection ; his loss shall be looked upon as their own by the functionaries of Government.’ The merchant used to be present before me at the time of audience, and was well acquainted with the etiquette to be practised towards sovereigns ; his eloquence and conversation were worth hearing. I was in the habit of sending for the ruby daily from the jewels office, and looking at it at the time of public audience. One day, having assembled the courtiers in the Public Hall of Audience, I was seated there ; the nobles and officers of State were standing in their respective places and ambassadors of various monarchs, who had come to offer me their congratulations in connection with my succession to the throne, were also present. I sent for the ruby as usual ; the officer in charge of the jewels office brought it ; I took it in my hand and began to praise it, and handed it over to the French Ambassador to look at. When he saw it he smiled and began to praise it just to please me ; in the same manner, it passed from hand to hand, and everybody looked at it, and all cried out with one voice, “ Your Majesty’s exceptional good fortune has placed such a jewel in your possession ; for otherwise, no sovereign has come by such a priceless gem, even unto this day.” At that moment my father’s Prime Minister, who was a wise man, and held the same exalted office under me, was standing in his place ; he made his obeisance and said, “ I wish to say something if my life be granted.”

‘ I gave him permission to speak ; he said, “ Mighty Sovereign, you are a king, and it does not become monarchs to praise a stone so much, though it is incomparable, in colour, in quality and in weight, yet, after all, it is but a stone and at this moment the ambassadors of the different powers are present in the court ; when they go back to their respective countries, they will certainly tell this story, saying ‘ What a strange king he is ; he has got hold of a ruby from somewhere, and makes so much of it that he sends for it every day and, after lauding it himself, shows it to every one present. Whatever king (*raja*)* hears it, the same will assuredly laugh at it in his own court. Mighty Sire, there is a very ordinary merchant at Neshapur, who, having stitched twelve rubies, each weighing as many as

* A term for a Hindu prince or sovereign.

even *mishkals*, into a collar, has put them round his dog's neck." On hearing this, I was transported with rage, and in the paroxysm of passion I said, " Strike off the head of this Wazir."

" The executioners instantly laid hold of his hands and were about to take him out to be executed. The ambassador of the King of the Franks, with his hands folded, advanced and stood before me, I asked him what he wanted. He replied, " I hope I may be informed of the nature of the Wazir's crime." I said, " What sin can be greater than that of telling lies, particularly before Kings ?" He answered " His falsehood has not yet been proved ; perhaps what he has asserted may be true, it is not proper to put an innocent man to death." I said to him in reply, " A rational being cannot understand, that a merchant, who, for the sake of gain, wanders, in a sad plight, from city to city and from country to country, and lays by every farthing he can save, should stitch twelve rubies each seven *mishkals* in weight into the collar of a dog." The ambassador rejoined, " Nothing is surprising before the omnipotence of God, perhaps it may be really so ; such curiosities often fall into the hands of merchants and mendicants, for they go to every country and whatever they get any where they bring with them. To me the best course, under the circumstances, appears to be that Your Majesty may order the wazir to be put in prison, if he is really as guilty as you think him to be, for wazirs are the good geniuses of sovereigns ; it is really ungracious on the part of a monarch like you that, in any affair, the truth or falsehood of which has not yet been proved, you should order your servant to be put to death, and forget his life-long devotion and fidelity. Mighty Sire, former sovereigns have built prisons for the reason, that when the kings or chiefs be angry with any one, they might confine him there. In a few days, their anger will have entirely worn off and the innocence of the accused will become apparent and the king will escape the sin of shedding innocent blood and will not have to answer for it to God on the day of judgment." Howmuchsoever I endeavoured to convince him of the unsoundness of his views, the ambassador of the Franks gave such reasonable answers and such irresistible arguments in support of his contention that reduced me to silence. Then I said, " Well, I admit the justice of what you say, and I will not have him just now executed, but he shall remain confined in a prison ; if in the space of a year his assertion proves to be true, namely, that there are such rubies round the neck of a dog, then he shall be set free, otherwise he shall be despatched with great tortures." I accordingly, ordered the wazir to be led to the prison. On hearing this order, the ambassador bowed

with profound respect in token of gratitude, and performed his parting salute. When this news reached the Wazir's family, weeping and lamentation took place, and his house became a house of mourning. The Wazir had a daughter some fourteen or fifteen years old, very beautiful and accomplished, and thoroughly well up in reading and writing. The Wazir loved her tenderly, and was deeply attached to her, so much so that he had built for her an elegant house just behind his own *diwankhana*; the daughters of nobles used to remain in her company, and handsome female attendants always waited upon her, with these she passed her time in laughter and merriment in playing and jumping about.

" It happened that on the day I sent the Wazir to prison the girl was seated with her playmates, and was celebrating, with all her child's pleasure, the marriage of her doll, and with drums and timbrels, she was making preparation for the night vigils and, having put the frying-pan on the hearth, she was busy making cakes and sweetmeats, when her mother rushed into her apartment weeping and beating her breast, with dishevelled hair and naked feet. She struck a blow on her daughter's head and said, ' Would to God that He had given me a blind son instead of thee, then my heart would have been at ease, and he would have helped his father in his hour of trouble.' The Wazir's daughter asked, ' Of what use would a blind son have been to you ? Whatever he could have done, I can do too.' The mother replied, ' Dirt be on thy head ! such a misfortune has befallen thy father that he has been sent to prison for saying something improper in the presence of the King.' The daughter asked, ' What was it that he said ? let me hear also.' Then the wife of the Wazir said, ' Perhaps thy father said, that there is a merchant at Neshapur who has sewed twelve priceless rubies on to the collar of a dog ; the King did not believe him but considering him to be a liar, has confined him in prison. If I had a son to-day, he would have exerted himself in every way, to discover the truth of the matter : he would have helped his father, implored the King's pardon, and have procured the release of my husband from the prison-house.' "

" The Wazir's daughter said in answer, ' O mother, one can not fight against fate ; it behoves man to have patience under sudden and unexpected calamities and to rely on the goodness of Heaven. He is merciful, and He never allows the troubles of any one to remain unremoved. It is not right to weep and lament, lest our enemies should misrepresent the motive of our weeping and

lamentation, and backbiters should calumniate us, for that would increase the King's wrath. On the contrary, let us pray for the happiness and prosperity of the protector of the world ; we are his hereditary vassals and he is our lord and master, even as he is angry, even so will he be kind and gracious.' Thus did the girl, by her wise and prudent words, comfort her mother who became somewhat patient and composed, and returned to her palace. When the night came, the Wazir's daughter sent for her nurse's husband (or foster-father), fell at his feet, and having besought him very much, she, with her eyes filled with tears said, ' I have made up my mind to wipe off the reproach my mother has cast on me, and procure the release of my father. If you will be my companion, then I will proceed to Neshapur and, having found the merchant who has put such rubies round his dog's neck, I will do all that may be necessary to bring him with me, and deliver my father.'

" At first the man refused ; but finally, after much discussion, he agreed to go with her. Then the Wazir's daughter said ' Make the preparations for the contemplated journey in secrecy and silence, and purchase some articles of merchandise worthy of being offered as presents to king and take as many slaves and servants as may be necessary but let not this circumstance be disclosed to any one.' The foster-father consented, and engaged himself in making the necessary preparations. When the things required had been got ready, they loaded them on the camels and mules and set out ; the Wazir's daughter also, having dressed herself in man's clothes, joined him. No one in the house knew anything whatever of the departure. When the day broke, there was a talk in the Wazir's family that his daughter had disappeared, and that it was not known what had become of her.

" At last, the mother, through fear of scandal and disgrace, concealed the circumstance of her daughter's disappearance, and there on the journey the Wazir's daughter gave herself out as a ' merchant's son.' Travelling on, stage by stage, they reached Neshapur and, with great pleasure, they went and took up their lodgings at an inn, and unloaded all their goods. The Wazir's daughter passed the night there ; in the morning she went to a bath and, having put on a rich dress after the cut and fashion of that worn by the inhabitants of Rum, she issued forth for a ramble through the city. Moving along, she arrived at the *chauk* (square) and stood where the four great streets met. She perceived a jeweller's shop on one side where a considerable heap of jewels was exposed for sale, and slaves richly attired were in attendance, with folded hands ; and a man

some fifty years old, clad, like rich people, in a half-sleeved jacket was seated there, with many respectable companions, who were seated on chairs and were talking among themselves.

" The Wazir's daughter, who had given herself out as a young merchant, was much surprised at seeing the jeweller ; and on reflection, she was rejoiced in her heart saying within herself, ' God grant that this be no delusion.' It is highly probable that this is the very merchant, of whom my father spoke in the King's presence. Great God, enlighten me on this man's history. Accidentally looking in another direction, she saw a shop in which two iron cages were suspended, and in each of them there was a man confined. Their appearance was like that of Majnun. only the skin and bones were left ; the hair of their heads and their nails were overgrown, and they sat each with his head resting on his breast ; two ugly looking negroes, armed to the teeth, stood on each side of the cages. The young merchant stood with astonishment depicted on her face, and exclaimed, ' God have mercy on us !' When she looked round the other way, she beheld another shop where carpets were spread, on which an ivory chair was placed with a velvet cushion ; on this cushion sat a dog, wearing a collar studded with rubies round his neck, and tied by a chain of gold ; and two handsome beardless slaves waited on him. One of them furnished with a fly-flap with a jewelled handle, was shaking it over the dog, and the other, holding an embroidered handkerchief in his hand, wiped therewith, from time to time, the dog's mouth and feet. Looking with attention the young merchant perceived that the dog's collar was actually studded with just such twelve rubies as she had heard of. She returned thanks to God at the discovery, and began to reflect thus, ' By what means can I carry these rubies to the King, and having shown them to him, get my father set at liberty ? ' She was absorbed in these perplexing thoughts ; and all the people in the square and on the road, seeing her beauty and loveliness, were wonder-struck, and stood like persons bereft of their senses. They said one to another, ' Up to this day, a person, so well formed and comely, we have never come across.' The Khwaja* also saw her, and sent a slave, saying, ' Go and beseech that merchant's son to come to me. '

" The slave went up to her, and delivered the message to his master, saying, ' If you will have the goodness to accompany me, my master will be pleased to see your honour.

*Chief or master, the great merchant, who owned the shop and other property therein.

Kindly come and see him.' The merchant's son, who wished the very thing, said, 'With the greatest of pleasure in the world.'

"The moment she came near the Khwaja, and he had a full view of her features, a dart of love pierced his heart; he got up to do her honour, but he was utterly confounded and bewildered. The young merchant perceived that he was fairly caught in the net of her charms; they embraced each other; the Khwaja kissed the young merchant's forehead, and made him sit down near him and asked him in a tone of great kindness and affection, 'Acquaint me with your name and parentage. Whence have you come, where do you intend going?' The young merchant replied, 'This humble servant's native land is Rum, and Constantinople has been for centuries the birthplace of my forefathers. My father is a merchant and, as from his extreme old age he has no longer the strength to travel from country to country on commercial business, he has sent me abroad to enable me to acquire a practical knowledge of trade; till now I had never crossed the threshold of my house, this is the first journey that I have undertaken; I had not the courage to come here by water, and therefore came by land; but your virtues and good qualities had made your name so famous in this country of Ajam (Persia) that I have come all this distance merely to enjoy the pleasure of meeting you. At last, by the grace of God, I have had the good fortune to sit in your august presence, and found you something better and nobler than what I had anticipated you to be; the desire of my heart is accomplished; God preserve and protect you, I will now depart from this place.' On hearing the concluding words of the young merchant's reply, the Khwaja's reason and senses vanished and he exclaimed, 'O son, do not let me hear of such a thing, but stay with me for a few days in my humble dwelling, and let me know where your goods and servants are.' The young merchant replied, 'The traveller's abode is the inn;* leaving them there I came to see you.' The Khwaja said, 'It does not become a person of your station to stay in an inn. I have some credit in this city, and a great reputation; send quickly for your servants, luggage, etc. I will vacate a house for your goods; let me see whatever articles of merchandise you have brought; I will so manage matters that in this very city you will be able to dispose of them at a considerable profit. At the same time, you will be at home here, and will be saved the trouble and vexation of travelling any further for a market, and by staying

* *Seraf* or *caravan serai*, a public building for the accommodation of travellers, merchants, &c., in Eastern cities and towns.

with me for a few days, you will make me your debtor.' The Wazir's daughter made some excuses, just for show, but the Khwaja would not accept them ; and addressing one of the agents, he said, ' Send for some porters as quickly as possible and, having brought the young merchant's goods from the *serai*, put them in such and such a place ''

" The young merchant also sent a negro slave of his own with the agent, with instructions to get the goods and luggage loaded and brought to the place designed for them, and she herself remained in the Khwaja's company till evening. When the time of the market was over and the shop was closed for the day, the Khwaja prepared to go home. One of the two slaves took the dog under his arm, and the other took up the stool and carpet ; and the two negro slaves put the cages on the heads of porters, and they themselves, armed to the teeth, went alongside of them. The Khwaja put the young man's hand in his own, and, conversing with him arrived at his house.

" The young merchant saw that it was a magnificent building, fit for kings and nobles to reside in. Carpet white as moonlight, were spread on the bank of a canal and in front of the *masnad* liquors of various kinds and relishes were arranged with taste. The dog's stool (or chair) was placed there also ; the Khwaja and the young merchant took their seats ; the former presented his young companion with some wine and both began to drink. When they got merry, the Khwaja called for dinner ; the cloth was spread and the choicest delicacies of the world served. First they put some food in a large shallow dish and, covering with a gold lid, carried it to the dog, and, having spread an embroidered cloth, they laid the dish before him. The dog came down from his stool, ate as much as he liked, drank some water out of a golden basin, re-ascended his stool, and sat thereon. The slave wiped his mouth and feet with a handkerchief, and then carried the dish and the basin to the two cages, which after having taken the keys from the Khwaja, they unlocked.

" They pulled out the two men imprisoned in the cages, dealt them several blows with a stick, and made them eat the leavings of the dog and drink the water left in the bowl out of which the animal had drunk ; when they had finished their sorry meal, the slaves fastened the doors of the cages, and handed over the keys to their master. After this the Khwaja began to eat himself. The young merchant did not approve of what he had seen ; and, being disgusted, did not touch the victuals.

The Khwaja besought him in the humblest manner possible to eat but he refused to accede to his request. Then the Khwaja enquired the reason of this, saying ' Why do you not eat ? The young merchant answered, ' This conduct on your part appears disgusting to me, for man is the noblest of God's creatures, and the dog is unquestionably the most unclean of all living beings. Hence, in what religion can it be justifiable to feed two of God's own creatures on the leavings of a dog ? Are not you satisfied with having them as your prisoners ? For in other respects you and they are equal. Now I doubt if you are a Muhammadan ; who can say who you are, for you worship your dog. It is disgusting to me to partake of your entertainment until this doubt is removed from my mind.'"

"The Khwaja answered, 'O son, I understand perfectly all you say, and for this very reason I am calumniated ; for the inhabitants of this city have given me the nickname of dog worshipping merchant, and call me so and have published it everywhere ; but may the curse of Heaven descend on the infidels and polytheists.' He then repeated the Kalma (or confession of faith) and set the young merchant's mind at ease. Then the young merchant said, ' If you are a Musalman in your heart, why have you drawn the censure of the world upon you by acting in this manner ? ' The Khwaja replied, ' My name is defamed, and I pay double tax in this city, for the sole reason that no one may know my secrets. The history of this mysterious circumstance is such that whoever should hear it, will gain nothing by the recital but sorrow and indignation. Do you also excuse my not relating it, nor will you have the patience and requisite composure of mind to listen to it.' The young merchant reflected in his mind, saying, ' I have only to mind my own business ; why should I needlessly press him any further on the subject.' He accordingly said in answer to the Khwaja ' All right, if it is not to be recounted, do not relate it.' He then began to partake of the refreshments and, having lifted a morsel, began to eat.

" Some two months the young merchant stayed with the Khwaja with such discretion and circumspection that nobody ever suspected that he was one of the fair sex. All thought that he was a male, and the Khawaja's affection for him grew stronger day by day, so that at last he could not have him out of his sight for a moment.

" One day, while they were regaling themselves with wine, the young merchant began to weep. On seeing it, the Khwaja comforted him, and began to wipe away his

tears with his handkerchief, and asked the reason of his crying. The young merchant replied, ' Honourable Sir, what shall I say ? Would to Heaven I had never obtained admission to your presence, and that your honour had never shown me the favours you are conferring on me. I am now distressed between two difficulties . I cannot bear to be torn from your presence, nor is there any chance of my staying here any longer. Now, it is absolutely necessary for me to go ; but if I am separated from your worship, I see but little hope of surviving the event."

"On hearing these words, the Khwaja, in spite of himself, wept so loudly that he was nearly choked, and he exclaimed, ' O light of my eyes ! are you so tired of your old servant, that you are going away, leaving him in such misery and affliction ? Drive away from your mind the idea of going ; stay with me as long as I live ; separate from you I shall not live one moment, but must die an untimely death. The climate of this country of Persia is very pleasant and congenial to health , you had best send some trustworthy man to your parents and ask them to come here with all their property ; I will place at your disposal whatever conveyances and equipages may be necessary for the purpose ; when your parents and all your relations and attendants shall have arrived, you may then carry on your commercial transactions with your mind free from all care and anxiety. I also have undergone many hardships, and have wandered from country to country. I am now grown old, and have no children; I hold you dearer than a son, and nominate you my heir and head manager. Be you also careful and attentive to my affairs. As long as I am alive, give me a bit of bread, with thy own hand, to eat ; when I am dead, give me a burial and take possession of all my property and goods.' To this the young merchant made answer, ' Really, sir, you have shown me more than a father's kindness and affection, so that I have forgotten my parents ; but the father of this humble sinner gave only a year's leave ; if I stay longer, he will in his extreme old age, weep himself to death ; moreover, a father's good-will and pleasure is meritorious in the eyes of Heaven, and if mine should be displeased with me I am afraid he will curse me, and I shall be deprived of, God's grace in this world as well as in the next. It will be an act of real kindness on your worship's part to give me leave to carry out the commands of my father and do a son's duty towards my sire, I shall, as long as there is breath in my body, bear the burden of gratitude I owe to your parental kindness. If I have the good fortune to reach my native land in safety, I shall ever cherish the

memory of your goodness with all my heart and soul. God is the causer of causes ; perhaps, through His grace, an occasion may again arise, which may once more enable me to kiss your feet."

" In short the young merchant set forth his case in such convincing and artful words that the poor Khwaja being helpless, yielded to the force of his young companion's arguments. Being completely charmed and fascinated with him, he said in reply. ' Well, if you are determined not to stay, I will myself go with you. I regard you as my life, my soul ; if my soul goes with you, of what use will the lifeless body be ? If you are resolved upon going, then do so, and take me with you.' Having said this to the young merchant, the Khwaja also began to make preparations for the journey, and issued orders to his agents to make speedy arrangements for the conveyances."

" When the news of the approaching departure of the Khwaja became public, all the merchants of the city, on hearing it, busied themselves likewise in preparations, to accompany him. The dog-worshipping Khwaja took with him countless treasures and jewels, servants and slaves, innumerable and numerous valuable curiosities and rare articles to be presented to kings and rulers, and having pitched, outside the city, tents, pavilions of every description, he went into them. All the other merchants took with them goods, each according to his means, and joined the Khwaja ; the gathering thus formed had the appearance of a regular army. One day, having chosen an auspicious moment for departure, they set out thence on their journey. They had with them thousands of camels laden with sacks filled with goods, and numerous mules carrying loads of gold and silver and precious stones, and five hundred slaves from the plain of Kapchok, from Abyssinia, and from Rum, completely armed, and perfectly skilled in the use of the sword, mounted on Arab and Turkish steeds and horses from Iraq, attended the caravan. In the rear of all, were the Khwaja and the young merchant, clad in rich garments and seated in Sedan chairs, and a magnificent Bagdad litter, fixed on the back of a dromedary, on which the dog-lay, reposing on a cushion and the cages of the two prisoners suspended on either side of another camel, were being borne along. At every stage they arrived, all the merchants would come out and wait upon the Khwaja and partake of the refreshments and wine so abundantly served on his hospitable board. The Khwaja poured forth his grateful thanks to Heaven for the blessing .

of having the young merchant as his companion, and moved on his journey, stage by stage. At last, they reached the suburbs of Constantinople in perfect health and safety, and pitched their tents without the city. The young merchant said to the Khwaja " O honourable sir, if you will give me leave I will go and see my parents and prepare a house for your reception ; when it comes into your exalted mind, you will be pleased to enter the city."

' The Khwaja replied, " I have come all this distance for your sake ; well go and see your parents and come to me as quickly as possible, and let me have a house to reside in near your own" The young merchant, having taken permission from the Khwaja came to his house. All the people in the Wazir's palace were surprised and said, " Who is the man, who has entered the house" The young merchant, that is to say, the Wazir's daughter, ran and fell at her mother's feet, and wept and said, " I am your daughter." On learning this the Wazir's wife began to reproach her, saying " O wanton girl, thou has turned out very wicked ; thou hast blackened thy own face, and brought disgrace and obloquy on thy family ; I had thought thee lost, and, after having mourned for thee, had become resigned and given thee up ; begone from here this instant.",'

' The Wazir's daughter took off her turban, and throwing it aside, said " Dear mother, I did not go to a bad place, and have done nothing wrong and improper ; I have had recourse to the plan in deference to your wishes, to have my father set at liberty. God be thanked that, through the efficacy of your prayers and through His own Divine grace, I have accomplished my object, and have returned successful from my journey. I have brought the merchant in question from Neshapur along with the dog, having the twelve precious rubies round his neck and I have come back with the spotless innocence which you bestowed on me I put on the dress of a man for the journey ; now only a day's work remains ; having done that I will get my father released from prison, and then return to you ; if you will give me permission, I will go back, and, having remained abroad one day, will come and wait upon you.' When the mother clearly perceived that her daughter had acted like a man, and had preserved her virtue and purity in all respects, she poured forth her grateful thanks to Heaven, and being pleased at the event clasped her daughter to her heart, and kissed her lips ; she prayed for her, blessed her and dismissed her, saying

"Act as thou thinkest best, I have every confidence in thee." The Wazir's daughter, having once more put on the disguise of a man, went to the dog-worshipping Khwaja. Her absence in the meantime had so much distressed him that, becoming impatient, he had left his encampment. It chanced that as the young merchant was going out in the environs of the city, the Khwaja was coming from the opposite direction—a meeting took place right in the middle of the road.

'One seeing him, the Khwaja exclaimed, "Son, leaving the old man alone, where hadst thou gone?" The young merchant answered, "I went home, having obtained leave from you; but the desire of waiting upon you would not allow me to prolong my stay there, and therefore I have come back to you." They saw a shady garden near the city on the bank of a stream and having pitched their tents alighted there. The Khwaja and the merchant's son, sitting together, began to drink wine and eat roasted meat. When the time of the afternoon prayer arrived they left their tents and sat on chairs just to amuse themselves and enjoy the beauties of the country around. The royal game-keeper, happening to pass that way, observed their retinue and their manners, and, struck with astonishment, he said to himself "Perhaps the ambassador of some king has come;" he stood and looked at the scene."

'One of the Khwaja's managers asked him to come forward, and enquired who he was. He replied, "I am the head game-keeper of the King." The messenger communicated this information to the Khwaja, who desired a negro slave to go and tell the game-keeper that they were travellers, that if he felt inclined to come and sit down, the coffee and pipe were ready. When the game-keeper heard the name of a merchant, his astonishment became still greater, and, following the slave he came into the Khwaja's presence; he saw on all sides rich furniture, rare pomp and splendour, and servants and slaves. He bowed to the Klwaja and the young merchant, and when he remarked the respect and attention accorded to the dog, his senses vanished, and he stood like one utterly confounded and amazed. The Khwaja requested him to sit down, and entertained him with coffee; the game-keeper enquired the merchant's name and address. When he begged leave to go, the Khwaja gave him several pieces of cloth and some rarities as presents and gave him permission to depart. In the morning when the game-keeper attended my royal audience, he related to the

courtiers present all that he had seen of the Khwaja ; gradually the news reached me. I summoned the head game-keeper into my presence, and asked him to tell me what he knew of the merchant. He related to me all that he had seen. On hearing of the dog's magnificence, and the confinement of two human beings in the cages, I was transported with rage, and exclaimed, "That heretic of a merchant deserves to die." I ordered some of my executioners to go with all possible haste and, having cut off the impious man's head, to bring it to me. It so happened that the same ambassador of the Franks was at the moment present in the court ; he smiled, and I became still more angry, and said, "Sir Impertinence, to show one's teeth, without rhyme and reason, in the presence of kings, is contrary to good manners ; it is better to weep than to laugh out of season."

'The ambassador answered, "Great King, several ideas flashed across my mind, and these made me smile. The first was that the Wazir had asserted nothing else than the truth, and would now be restored to his freedom ; the second was that Your Majesty would not have to incur the guilt of shedding the innocent blood of the Wazir, and the third was that the protector of the world, without any cause or crime, ordered the merchant to be executed. At these circumstances I was surprised, and could not understand how Your Majesty could, without making enquiry, and relying on the statement of a fool, order people to be put to death. God knows what the real facts of the merchant's case are ; summon him into the royal presence, and enquire into his circumstances ; if he proves guilty, Your Majesty is the master : you may deal with him just as you please."'

'When the ambassador explained the matter in this light to me, I remembered what the Wazir had said and issued orders that the Khwaja, the young merchant, the dog, and the two cages, should be brought into my presence without a moment's delay.

'The courtiers set off on their errand with all possible speed, and brought them all before me. I desired them to approach. First came the Khwaja and his adopted son, both attired in magnificent robes. All the courtiers, both high and low, were struck with astonishment and utterly bewildered on seeing the young merchant's superb beauty ; he brought in his hand a golden tray filled with jewels (each of which was sufficiently brilliant

to illuminate the entire room), and laid it as an offering before my throne, made his obeisance, and stood in respectful attitude. The Khwaja also kissed the ground, and invoked blessings on my head ; he spoke in such sweet and bewitching modulation as if he were a nightingale pouring forth a thousand melodies. I was extremely pleased with his speech, so elegant and decorous, but, putting on an air of sternness, I exclaimed, "O Satan in human form ! what trap is this that thou hast laid, and in thy own faith what pit is it that thou hast dug ; what faith dost thou follow, and what sort of behaviour is this I see ? Of what prophet, are thou a follower ? Even if thou art an infidel, how can'st thou account for such conduct ? What is thy name, that thou actest in this fashion ?" The Khwaja replied in a tone of calmness and composure, " May Your Majesty's age and wealth ever increase ; this slave's religious creed is this : God is one, and he has no equal ; moreover, I respect the confession of Faith of Muhammad the chosen (may the mercy of God be on him and his descendants ; may he be safe). After Muhammad I regard the twelve Imams as my guides, and my rites are these that I repeat my prayers at the five appointed hours, I keep fasts and I have likewise performed the pilgrimage, and from my wealth I give one fifth in charity, and am called a Musalman. But there is a reason, which I cannot reveal ; that I seem to possess those bad qualities which have displeased Your Majesty and for which I am hated and denounced by every one of God's creatures. I am called a dog-worshipper, and pay double taxes ; to all this I submit ; but the secret which lies buried in my heart I have not disclosed to any one." On hearing this excuse I became still more angry. I said " Dost thou mean to coax me with words ? I will not believe them until thou statest the reasons which lie at the bottom of thy superstitions and impious practices, and convince me of their truth; only then thou may'st escape with life, or as a retribution for the enormities thou hast been committing, I will cause thy belly to be ripped open, so that every body may be warned not to infringe in future the law of Muhammad.

' The Khwaja answered, " O King, refrain from shedding the blood of this unfortunate wretch, but confiscate all my wealth, which is past all counting and reckoning, and, having made me and my son a votive offering to Your Majesty's throne, set us at liberty, and grant us our lives.' I smiled and said, " O fool ! dost thou tempt me with thy riches ? Thou can'st never regain thy liberty unless thou speakest the truth."

' On hearing these words, tears, copious and abundant, began to course the Khwaja's cheeks ; he looked towards his son, heaved a deep sigh, and said " I am criminal in His Majesty's opinion ; I shall be executed ; what shall I do now ? to whose care shall I commit thee ? " I threatened him and said, " O hypocrite ! cease , what thou hast to say, say it as quick as possible "

' Then indeed that man stepped forward, approached the throne, kissed the foot of it, and, having praised and enlogised me, said, " O King of Kings, if the order of my execution had not been given, I would have endured every torture and would not have recounted my history ; but life is dearer than every thing else , nobody purposely and deliberately jumps into a well., self-preservation is right, and any departure from what is right is contrary to the commandments of Heaven Well ! if such is the King's pleasure, may it please you to listen to the adventures of this weak old man. First, let an order be issued for the two cages in which the two men are imprisoned, to be brought and placed before Your Majesty I am going to give an account of my adventures ; if I speak falsely anywhere in the course of my narration, then ask them to convict me. and let justice be done to both parties " I approved of his proposal and, having sent for the cages, took out the prisoners, and made them stand near the Khwaja.'

' The Khwaja said, " O King ! he who stands on the right hand of your slave, is my eldest brother, and he who is standing on my left is my second brother ; I am younger than they ; my father was a trader in the empire of Persia, and when I was fourteen years old he died. After the ceremony of interring the body was over, and the garlands of flowers had been removed from the dead body on the *Sujam**, my two brothers said to me one day, " Let us divide whatever our father has left behind—even all his wealth and property, and let each make whatever use he likes of his share.' On hearing these words, I said, " O brothers what sort of proposal is this ! I am your slave, and lay no claim to the rights of a brother. Our father is indeed dead ; but you both are living and are to me in place of a father I only require a dry loaf daily to sustain life, and to remain vigilant and active in your service. What have I to do with shares or divisions. I shall satisfy the craving of hunger with your leavings and live with you. I am yet a mere boy, and have not yet learnt even to read and write ; what am I fit for. At present do you bestow upon me the blessings of knowledge."'

*The rites gone through for the departed on the third day after demise.

'On hearing this, they replied, "Thou desirest to ruin and impoverish us along with thyself?" To this I made no reply, but retired to a corner and wept; then I reflected within myself and said, "My brothers, after all, are older and wiser than myself; they are reproving me for my benefit and to the end that I may acquire some education and learn some profession." Absorbed in these thoughts I fell asleep. When the day broke, a messenger from the Qazi came, and led me to the court of justice; I saw that both of my brothers were there in attendance upon the judge.'

'The Qazi asked me, "Why dost thou not take thy share of thy father's property?" I reiterated the words I had uttered at home (when my brothers had proposed that we should divide our father's wealth). "If what he says," said my brothers to the Qazi, "represents his real sentiments, then let him give us a deed of release to the effect that he has relinquished all claim to our father's property and wealth." Even then I reflected that as they were older and more experienced than me, they counselled me for my good, and that if I received my share of what had been bequeathed to us by our parent, I might go and squander it to no purpose. So, in deference to their wishes, I gave them a deed of release, with the Qazi's seal affixed to it. They were satisfied, and I returned home.

'The second day after this, they said to me, "We want the room in which you live; do you rent another house for your residence, and go and take up your lodging there." It was then that I came to find out that they did not like that I should even stay in my father's house; I had no other alternative, and I consequently made up my mind to leave it. O Asylum of the world! when my father was alive, whenever he came back from his travels abroad, he made it a point of bringing with him curiosities of different lands and giving them to me as presents; the reason being that every one loves his youngest child most. I, from time, to time disposed of these curiosities, and raised a small capital of my own; with this amount I carried on some trade. On one occasion my father brought me a female slave from Tartary, and on another he brought some horses from the same country, out of which he presented me with a likely young colt, which I used to feed from my own little property.

'At last, observing the cruelty of my brothers, I purchased another house, and went and took up my quarter there; this dog also went along with me. I bought the necessary articles for house-keeping and purchased two slaves to wait upon me; with the remainder I set up a cloth-merchant's shop, and trusting in God I sat down ~~anxiously in it and felt contented with my lot.~~ My brothers

had indeed behaved inhumanly to me, yet Heaven was kind to me, and my shop in three years' time prospered so much, that I became a man of credit. Whatever curiosities in the shape of clothes or dresses were needed in every influential family, went from my shop only; my profits were considerable, and I began to live in affluent circumstances; every hour I poured forth my thanks to the pure God, and lived at ease; and often repeated these verses as applicable to my case

Verses.

Why, let the Prince be displeased;
I have absolutely no business with him.
Except Thyself, O mighty Sovereign,
What other king can I eulogise,
Why, let my brothers be displeased :
They can do nothing to injure me.
Thou alone art my helper ;
Then to whom else shall I apply for assistance ?
Let my friend or foe be displeased, I care not ;
Day and night let me fix my affections on Thy feet only.
Let the world be displeased with me,
But Thou art far mightier than the world ;
All will kiss my thumb ;
Thou alone should'st not be offended with me.

' It happened that on a Friday I was sitting at home, when a slave of mine who had gone to the market to purchase necessaries, returned somewhat earlier than expected, in tears. I enquired the reason of his tears, saying "What has happened to thee?" He angrily answered, " What business is it to you? Do you enjoy yourself but how will you justify yourself on the day of judgment ?" I said, "O you Ethiopian ! what calamity has fallen thee ?" He replied, " This is the calamity, that a Jew, having pinioned your brothers, in the square, is thrashing them with a cane, and laughs and says, ' If you will not pay me my money, then as sure as any thing I will beat you to death ; it will be at least a meritorious act on my part.' Such is the treatment which your brothers are receiving ; O you are indifferent ; is this right, and what will the world say." The moment I heard these words, my blood boiled ; I ran towards the square with naked feet, and told the slave to follow me with the money with all possible speed. On my arrival there I found that what the slave had said was true ; blows were raining thick and fast on my brothers. I said to the Magistrate's guards, " For Heaven's sake desist for a while, let me ascertain from the Jew what great offence my brothers have committed in return for which he is inflicting upon them such severe punishment." On saying this I stepped up to the Jew and said, " To-day is Sabbath* Friday; why art thou beating them with a rattan ?" The Jew replied, " If you would befriend them, then do it fully, and let me have the money

*Friday is the Muhammadan Sabbath.

in their stead ; or else take the road to your house ?" I said, "What do they owe you ? Produce the bond, and I will count out the whole amount." "I have just made over the bond to the Magistrate," he replied. At this moment my two slaves came up with two bags of money. I paid a thousand rupees to the Jew and got my brothers released. They were in a sad plight—naked, hungry and thirsty ; I brought them with me to my own dwelling, had them instantly washed in the bath, and dressed in new clothes and treated them to a hearty meal. Never did I ask them as to what they had done with our father's large property, that they should feel ashamed.

' O King, they are both standing in your presence; ask them if I tell the truth, or mistake any of the circumstances. Well, after a short space of time, when they had recovered from the blows they had received, I said to them one day, " O brothers, you have lost your credit in this city, it is better that you should spend some days in travelling abroad.' To this they made no reply ; but I could plainly see that the proposal was acceptable to them. I set about making preparations for their journey, and having made satisfactory arrangements in respect of tents, baggage and all necessary conveyances and vehicles, I bought for them goods to the amount of twenty thousand rupees. A caravan of merchants was going to Bukhara, and I sent him along with them.

' A year after the caravan returned, but I could not obtain any news regarding my brothers ; at last, I conjured a friend with all that was sacred to tell me what he knew. He replied, ' When we reached Bukhara, one lost all his property at a gambling house, and now sweeps the den which he keeps clean and well-plastered and waits on the gamblers who assemble there ; they give him something by way of charity, and he lives there as a scullion. The other fell in love with a *boza-vendor's** daughter, and has squandered all his property on her ; and he now does all sorts of menial work at the ale-house. The people of the caravan do not tell you these things because you would feel ashamed when you hear them.' "

' On hearing these facts from the men I was in a strange state ; hunger and sleep both left me through anxiety and grief ; taking a supply of money for the expenses of the journey, I set off immediately to Bukhara. † On arriving there I searched for them both, and having found them, I brought them to the house I had hired in that city. I had them washed, and dressed in new clothes, and I did not make the faintest allusion to what had happened through fear of putting them to shame. I again purchased some

* *Boza*, a kind of beer.

† A beautiful city in Tartary, famous for its climate, its fruits, and its lovely women.

articles of merchandise for them and returned with them home. While we were yet in the vicinity of Neshapur, I left them at a village, with all the merchandise and property, and came clandestinely to my house, for the reason that nobody should hear the news of my arrival. Two days after, I gave out that my brothers had returned from their commercial travels, and that on the following day I should go out to receive them. In the morning, as I wished to set out, a farmer of the village came to me, and began to utter loud complaints; on hearing his voice I came out, and seeing him bathed in tears, asked, 'Why art thou crying?' He answered, 'My house has been plundered through your brothers; would to God you had not left them there!'

"I asked, 'What misfortune has happened?' He answered 'A gang of robbers came at night, and plundered their goods and property, and with that sacked my house too!' I was moved by his pitiable condition and asked 'Where are those two now? They are sitting outside the city, stark-naked, ruined and in the greatest distress.'

"I instantly repaired to them with two suits of clothes and having dressed them, brought them home. The people of the city, hearing of the robbery, came to see them, but through shame they would not come out. Three mouths passed away in this manner; at last I reflected within myself, 'How long will they thus keep seated in a corner? If it can be managed, I will take them with me on a journey.' I made the proposal to my brothers, and added, 'If you command this slave, he will cheerfully accompany you.' As before, they made no answer. I once more began to make the necessary preparations for a voyage, bought some articles of merchandise, and, taking my brothers with me, set out. After I had given away the customary gifts to the poor and needy for a happy and successful termination of the voyage, and loaded the goods on the ship, we weighed anchor and proceeded on our journey. The dog was sleeping on the shore; when he awoke and saw the ship in the middle of the sea, he was alarmed, and having barked and jumped into the water, he commenced swimming after us; I hastily sent a skiff to bring him, and the men having at last got hold of the animal, conveyed him into the vessel. A month passed away in safety on the ocean; somehow my second brother fell in love with my slave girl. One day he thus addressed his eldest brother, 'We have been much disgraced and greatly put to shame by receiving favours at the hands of a younger brother, what plan shall we adopt to get rid of this evil?' The eldest replied, 'I have already fixed upon a plan in my mind; if it can be carried

out, it will prove most advantageous to us.' Both of them at last, held a consultation together, and came to the unanimous decision to destroy me and possess themselves of all my wealth and property.

"One day, I lay asleep in the ship's cabin, and the slave girl was *shampooing* me, when my second brother entered in haste, and awakened me. I started up confusedly and came out on the deck. The dog also followed at my heels. I saw that my eldest brother, leaning on his hands against the ship's side, was gazing steadfastly on the wonders of the deep and calling out to me. I approached him, and said, 'Is all well?' He replied, 'Behold the curious phenomenon; mermaids, with pearls and shells and coral trees in their hands, are dancing in the sea.' If any one else had said such a thing, so contrary to reason and common sense, I would never have credited his words. I thought that what my brother told me was true, and consequently I bent down my head to look at the sight. Howmuchsoever I strained my eyes in the direction pointed out I could see nothing, while my brother kept saying, 'Do you now see it?' Had there been anything to see, I should have certainly seen it. Having put me off my guard by this trick, my second brother stood behind me unperceived and gave me such a push, that, being helpless, I fell into the water, and they began to scream and shout with all their might and main, 'Help, help, our brother has fallen into the sea.'

"In the meantime the ship rolled on its course, and the waves tossed me from one side to the other. I sank over and over again, and went drifting along the current. I was at last quite exhausted. I appealed to God for help, *apparently* no help came. All of a sudden my hand came in contact with something; I looked around and beheld this very dog. Perhaps when they pushed me into the sea, he also leaped after me, and kept swimming alongside of me. I laid hold of its tail, and God made him the cause of my deliverance. Seven days and nights this state of things lasted; on the eighth we reached the shore. I had not the least strength left; but throwing myself on my back and rolling along as well as I could, I threw myself on dry land. For one whole day, I remained perfectly unconscious; on the second, the barking of the dog reached my ears. I came to myself, and offered thanks to God for my deliverance. Looking around, I could see at a distance the suburbs of a city; but where had I strength that I should essay to reach it? Having no other alternative, I crawled along two paces, and then rested; thus struggling along I had done two miles by the evening. Half way to

the city, I came across a hill, and lay there all night; next morning I entered the city; when I came to the bazaar and saw the shops of the bakers and confectioners, my heart longed to taste the delicious things lying in them; but I had not a farthing to buy any thing. I moved along, comforting myself with saying 'I will ask something from the next shop.' At last all my strength was gone; the fire of hunger blazed in my stomach; and my soul was on the point of shuffling off its mortal coil. All of a sudden, I saw two men, dressed after the fashion of the Persians, and walking along hand in hand. On seeing them I was delighted, thinking them to be my countrymen, who might perhaps know me, and to whom, consequently, I might relate my circumstances. When they drew near, I discovered that they were both my own brothers. I was extremely delighted at the discovery, and returned my grateful thanks to heaven, saying 'God has preserved my honour; I have not stretched forth my hands before a stranger for help.' I approached them and saluted them, and kissed my eldest brother's hands. The moment they recognized me, they raised a great outcry and the second brother gave me such a slap that I reeled, and fell down. I caught hold of the skirt of my eldest brother, thinking perhaps that he would take my part; but he gave me a kick.

"In short, they both thrashed me till I was almost dead, and acted towards me as Joseph's brothers did towards him in times of yore. I implored them in God's name to forbear, and entreated mercy, but they were relentless and implacable. A crowd assembled around us, and every body enquired, 'What is this man's crime?' Then my brothers answered, 'This villain was our brother's servant; he pushed him over into the sea, and took away all his goods and property. We have long been in search of him and to-day we have come upon him in this habit.' And they kept questioning me, saying, 'O scoundrel! what diabolical idea came into thy head, that thou killedst our brother? What harm had he done to thee? Did he do thee an ill turn when he appointed thee the superintendent of his affairs?' They both then rent their collars and, feigning grief, wept bitterly for their brother, and kept thrashing and kicking me.

"In the meantime, the officers of the Governor arrived and speaking to them in a threatening tone, said, 'Why are you beating him?' And seizing me by the hand, they led me before the Magistrate. These two also went along with us, and they told the Magistrate the story which they had related to the crowd, and, having offered him something as a bribe, they prayed for justice, and demanded blood for

blood. The Magistrate asked me what defence I had to make. Through hunger and the beating I had received, I was reduced to such a state that I had no power of speech left; having hung down my head, I stood dumb and mute; no answer came from my mouth. The Magistrate, too, was convinced that I was certainly a murderer; he ordered me to be taken to the plain, and there impaled.

" O Asylum of the world, I had paid money and got these two here released from the bondage of the Jew (who would never have hesitated to beat and starve them to death), and in return for this kindness, they too gave money, in order that they might take away my life. They are both present; ask them if in all that I have related, I have departed from the actual truth even by a hair's breadth. In short, they carried me to the plain; when I saw the stake I knew that it was all up with me.

" Except this dog, I had no one to weep for me. His state was such that he was rolling on every one's feet and barking. Some beat him with sticks, others threw stones at him, but he never moved from his place. I stood with my face towards *Kibla*,* and addressing myself to Heaven, I said, 'At this moment I have no one except Thyself to interpose and save the innocent. Thou alone canst save me now, and naught else.' After this address, I repeated the confession of Faith, rolled and fell down. By the dispensation of God, it so happened that the ruler of the country was taken ill with the colic; the nobles and physicians assembled; but whatever remedies they administered failed to do the slightest good. One holy man said, 'The best of all remedies is that you should bestow alms on the poor and needy, and set the prisoners at liberty; for prayer is more efficacious than physic.' Instantly, royal messengers dashed in mad haste towards the prison-house.

" By chance, one came to the very plain where I was to be impaled. Seeing the multitude, he ascertained from a spectator that they were going to impale some one. The moment he heard this, he rode up to the stake, and cut the ropes with his sword. He threatened and reproved the Magistrate's guards, saying, 'At such a time, when the King lies prostrate on his bed, convulsed with pain, are you going to deprive a human being of life?' and he caused me to be set at liberty. Upon this the two brothers repaired to the Magistrate and besought him to have me executed. As this officer had already received a bribe from them, he readily agreed to what they demanded. The Magistrate said to

* The point to which the Musalmans turn their faces when at prayer, Mecca.

them, 'Be easy in your minds; I will now confine him in such a way that he will, of himself, die of starvation through want of food and drink and nobody will know anything about the matter.' They seized me over again, and kept me in a corner. At a distance of some two miles from the city there was a mountain, in which, in the time of the Prophet Solomon, the genii had dug a narrow and dark well; it went under the name of *Solomon's Dungeon*. Whoever incurred the King's particular displeasure, was thrown in this dungeon, where he perished of himself through want of sustenance. To be brief, these two brothers and the Magistrate's guards conveyed me, in silence, towards the mountain and, having thrown me into the pit and thus set their minds at ease, returned. O Monarch! this dog went with me, and when they cast me into the dark well he remained lying on its edge. For some time I lay perfectly unconscious in the pit, and when I regained my senses a little, I thought I was dead, and fancied that place to be my grave. At this moment, the sounds of two men's voices reached my ears. I thought they were *Nakir** and *Munkir,** who had come to ask me questions and I likewise heard the rustling of a robe, as if somebody had let it down there. I was bewildered and confounded, and began to feel about on the ground, when some bones came into my grasp.

"After a few minutes, a sound, resembling that made by the mouth when a person is masticating, reached my ears. It seemed as if somebody was eating. I asked, 'O creatures of God! who are you? Do tell me for God's sake.' They burst into a laugh, and said, 'This is the great Solomons' Dungeon, and we are prisoners.' I enquired 'Am I really alive?' They again laughed heartily, and said 'You are as yet in the land of the living, but you will soon quit it.' I said, 'What are you eating? let me have some of it too.' This put them out, they gave me a dry answer and nothing else. After enjoying their meal they went to sleep. I, on the contrary, through weakness and exhaustion, fell into a fainting fit and wept and thought of my Maker. Mighty King, I was seven days in the sea, and so many days since without any nourishment whatever in consequence of the unfounded accusations of my brothers; indeed, in place of food, I had received a thrashing, and was now entombed in a dungeon from which the slightest possibility of escape did not enter even into my imagination.

*The names of the two angles who according to the Muhammadan creed, are supposed to examine the spirits of the departed in the tomb. They do the work which belongs to them the moment a person is laid in his grave.

At last the time of death agonies arrived; sometimes my breath came, and sometimes it came not. From time to time, a person came at midnight, and, wrapping some loaves of bread in a handkerchief, and tying a jug of water to a rope, he would let them down, and call out. The two men who were my fellow-prisoners by my side, would seize them and eat and drink. The dog, constantly observing this circumstance, thus reflected, ‘ Just as this person lets down bread and water into this dungeon, do thou also adopt some plan, whereby some food may reach that helpless one who is thy master, then his life will be saved. Having thought thus, he went into the city, and saw that round loaves of bread were arranged and piled up on a counter in a baker’s shop. Jumping up, he seized a cake in his mouth, and ran off with it; the people hastened after him and threw at him brick-bats, but he would not let go his hold of the cake; they got tired of chasing him any farther, and returned; the dogs of the city pursued him; he fought and struggled with them, and having saved the loaf he came to the well, and threw in his prize.

“ On the outskirts of a certain village, there was an old woman’s hut; jars and pots filled with water, were placed there, and the ancient dame was plying her spinning-wheel. The dog approached the pot, and endeavoured to lift it up; the matron spoke threateningly and the pot slipped from the dog’s mouth and, falling upon another jar, broke it to pieces; upon this the rest of the vessels rolled over and the water was spilt. The old woman got hold of a stick and rose to strike the animal; the dog seized the hem of her garment, and began to rub his mouth on her feet and wag his tail; after that he ran towards the mountain; coming back to her again, he sometimes seized the rope and anon, having lifted up the bucket, in his mouth, he showed it to her; and he rubbed his mouth on her feet and catching hold of the skirt of her clothes, he kept pulling her. The Almighty moved the heart of the old dame, so, taking up the rope and bucket, she accompanied him. He, seizing the end of her garment, after leaving the cottage, walked on before her.

“ At last he conducted her to the very mountain; the old woman concluded, from the manner in which the dog had behaved, that his master was assuredly confined in the dungeon, and that, he, perhaps, wanted water for him. To be brief, the dog leading, the old woman filled a jar with water and let it down by the rope. I seized the vessel and ate a part of the loaf, and thus satisfied the cravings of hunger. Having returned thanks to Heaven for this most opportune assistance, I retired to the corner, and,

there waited for further developments of the Divine purpose, saying ‘Now let us see what happens.’ In this manner, this dumb animal would bring me bread, and by the help of the old woman, would furnish me with water to drink. When the bakers found that the dog always carried of a loaf of bread in this way, they had pity on him, and made it a point of throwing him a cake whenever they saw him ; and if the old woman ever failed to bring me water, he would break her pots, so that being helpless, she brought me a jug of water regularly every day. This faithful companion set my mind at ease, as regards bread and water and he himself would keep lying at the mouth of the well. Six months passed away in this manner but imagine the condition of a man who is so long shut up in a dungeon totally inaccessible to the fresh air of heaven. I had only skin and bone left, and life became a burden to me. I would often exclaim in my heart, ‘O God, it would be a blessing if my soul departed from my body.’

“One night, while my fellow-prisoners were asleep, my heart overflowed with grief ; I could not help bursting into a flood of tears, and to implore Heaven to put an end to my tortures. In the last watch of the night what did I see but that by the dispensation of Providence a rope was let down into the well, and I heard a voice saying distinctly, ‘O ill-fated wretch ! tie the end of the rope tightly to thy hands and come out of this place.’ On hearing these words, I thought that my brothers had at last taken compassion on me, and, impelled by fraternal affection, had personally come to pull me out. Overjoyed at the thought, I fastened the rope tightly round my waist ; somebody pulled me up. The night was so unusually dark that I could not make out who it was that had drawn me up. After I was out, I heard, ‘Come, look sharp ; this is no place to tarry.’ My strength had entirely gone ; but, through fear, I staggered down the hill as fast as I could. At the foot of the hill, I saw two horses, saddled and all : the person, who had pulled me out, mounted me upon one of them, and himself got upon the other, and took the lead. Riding on, we arrived to the bank of a river.

“The morning broke, and we had travelled some forty-four miles from the city. I could now see the young man very clearly ; he was armed to the teeth, wearing a coat of mail, together with back, front, and side pieces of polished steel (brilliant as mirrors) and with iron mour on his horse, he was looking fiercely at me, and ting his lips. In his towering passion, he unsheathed his word, and, spurring his horse, close to mine, he brandished

his sword at me. I threw myself off from the horse on the ground, and implored for mercy, saying, 'I am innocent, why are you going to slay me ? O generous sir, you pulled me out from such a dreadful dungeon, and now this unkindness !' He answered, 'Tell me truly who thou art.' I replied, 'I am a traveller ; I had become involved in unmerited danger, but, through your generous help, I have once more been restored to life and freedom,' and I used many more flattering expressions towards him.

" God inspired his heart with pity. He sheathed his sword and said, ' Well, what God wills, ever that He does ; go I grant thee thy life. Get upon your horse as sharp as possible ; this is no place to delay in.'

" We spurred on our horses, and proceeded. On the road he kept regretting and repenting. By the time of midday prayer, we arrived at an island. There the young man got off his horse, and assisted me to dismount also ; he removed the saddles and pack-saddles from the horses' backs and let them loose to graze ; he also took off his arms from his waist and, taking his seat, thus addressed me : ' O evil-fated man ! now relate to me thy history, so that I may know who thou art.' I told him my name, and place of residence, and all that had happened to me I related to him fully and faithfully.

" When the youth had heard my adventures to the end, he burst into tears and said, ' O young man ! now hear my story. I am the daughter of the ruler of Zairbad,* and the young man, who is confined in *Solomon's Dungeon* is called Bahramand ; he is the son of my father's Prime Minister. One day the King issued an order that all the chiefs and princes should assemble on the plain to shoot arrows and play hockey, so that the horsemanship and skill in archery of every one might be tried and tested. I was seated near the queen, my mother, behind one of the lattices of the topmost story, and the nurses and female companions were in attendance around ; from there I was watching the sport. The Minister's son was the handsomest youth of them all ; caracoling his horse, he was performing his exercises with rare skill and dexterity. He appeared attractive in my eyes, and I fell in love with him. I kept this affair secret for a long time.'

" At last, when I became very uneasy, I communicated it to the nurse, and bestowed on her many presents to secure her assistance and co-operation. She managed, somehow or other, to bring the youth privately into my

* A name given to the countries lying below Bengal. *Ava* and *Pegu* are also included in these.

apartment ; he too, reciprocated my affection. Many days passed in these love visits. One midnight, the guards saw him going armed into the seraglio ; they seized him, and reported the matter to the King. He ordered him to be executed ; but, through the intercession and solicitation of the nobles and officers of State, his life was spared, but he was directed to be cast into *Solomon's Dungeon* ; and the other youth, who is his fellow-prisoner, is his brother, and was with him the night he fell into the hands of the guards. Both were thrown into the well, and it is now three years since they were consigned to the horrors of that frightful dungeon. Nobody, however, has as yet discovered the reason why the youth entered the King's palace. God has preserved my honour, and, in return for his mercy, I considered it my duty to furnish them with food and drink. Since their confinement I have gone to the well after every eight days, and supplied them with provisions at each visit.

" Last night, I saw in a dream that somebody directed me, saying, Get up quickly and take a horse, a suit of clothes, a rope-ladder, and some cash for expenses and repair to that well, and pull out from it that helpless man.

" On hearing this, I startled up highly rejoiced. I attired myself in the habit of a man, filled a casket with precious stones and gold coins, and taking this horse and some clothes with me I went to the dungeon to pull him up with a ladder. It was in your fate to be released from such a confinement in the manner in which you have been ; nobody has the slightest idea of what I have done ; perhaps he was some guardian angel that directed me to come and deliver you. Well, whatever was written in my destiny, the same happened.'

" Having ended the narrative, she took out some cakes fried in butter, some wheaten bread, some pulse and some meat-curry, from her towel ; but first having taken out some sugar-candy she dissolved it in a metal cup and, having poured into it some *bed-mushk* handed it over to me. I took it from her hand and drank it, and then ate a little breakfast. After a short time, she made me wrap a piece of cloth round my waist, and took me to the river where, with a pair of scissors, she cut my hair and nails, and having thoroughly bathed and washed me attired me in a fine suit of clothes and made quite a new man of me. I turned my face towards Mecca and poured forth the thanks of a grateful heart to the Almighty for His mercies ; the lovely girl kept looking at what I was doing.

"When I had done praying, she asked me, 'What is this thou hast done ?' I replied, I have been worshipping the omnipotent God, who has brought the whole world into being and who has sent me assistance through a being as charming and lovely as thou art, and who has favourably and generously inclined thy heart towards me, and caused me to be released from such a dungeon. He is without a partner, to Him I have offered my adoration and homage, and returned my thanks. On hearing these words, she said, 'Are you a Musalman ?' 'God be praised, I am,' was my answer. 'My heart,' she said, 'is pleased with that you have said ; instruct me in your faith also, and teach me to repeat the creed.' I said in my mind, 'Heaven be praised ; she is willing to accept our religion.' In short, I recited the creed namely, *There is no God but God and Muhammed is His Prophet*, and made her repeat it. Then getting upon our horses, we resumed our journey. When we halted for the night, she talked of nothing but our religion and faith and listened attentively and with evident pleasure to whatever I told her. In this way, we travelled on continually day and night for two whole months.

"At last, we arrived in a country ; which was situated between the confines of the kingdoms of Zairbad and Ceylon; a city came in sight whose population exceeded that of Constantinople, and whose climate was exceedingly pleasant and agreeable. On learning that the ruler of this land was superior even to Nausherwan himself in his regard for justice, and in protecting his subjects, my heart was delighted. Having reached the city, we bought a house, and took up our quarters therein. After some days, when we had recovered from the fatigues of the journey, I purchased certain articles that were necessary, and married the young lady in accordance with the Muhammadan rites, and began to live with her. In the space of three years, having freely associated with the great and small of the city, I had established my credit and entered into an extensive trade. At last, I surpassed all the merchants of the place. One day, I went to the Prime Minister to pay my respects, and perceived a large gathering of people assembled on a plain, I asked some one, 'Why is such a crowd of people here ?' I was informed that two persons had been caught committing adultery and theft, perhaps they had even committed murder ; they had been brought to the plain to be stoned to death.

The moment I heard this I recollect my own case, namely, that once I had been seized and led out to be put on the stake in the same manner, and that God had saved

me. 'Who can these be,' I asked myself, 'that should have become overtaken by such a calamity ? I do not even know if they deserve the punishment that is going to be inflicted upon them, or whether, like me ; they are the victims of a false charge. Making my way with difficulty through the crowd, I reached the spot where the culprits were. I recognized them to be my brothers who were being dragged to the place of execution with their arms pinioned, and with bear heads and feet. On seeing them in this sorrowful condition my blood glowed with fraternal affection, and my liver was on fire. I gave the guards a handful of gold coins and implored them to delay execution for a moment, and thence, putting my horse to its fastest paces, I repaired to the house of the Magistrate. I made him a present of an invaluable ruby, and interceded for them. He replied, 'A person has lodged a plaint against them, and their guilt has been fully proved ; the King has passed the final order ; and I am perfectly helpless in the matter.'

" At last, after much entreaty and supplication on my part the Magistrate sent for the complainant, and prevailed upon him to withdraw his charge of murder in consideration of five thousand rupees to be paid to him. I told out the money and obtained his engagement not to prosecute them again and liberated them from such a fearful calamity. Mighty sire, ask them if I state stern facts, or indulge in falsehoods. At this question, the two brothers hung down their heads and stood like persons ashamed.

" Well (to proceed with my narrative) I got them set at liberty, conducted them to my house, had them washed and dressed, and assigned them rooms for their residence in the *diwankhana*. I would not now allow my wife to come into their presence, but personally looked to their wants and requirements, took my meals with them, and at the hour of sleep retired to my own apartment. For three years, I continued showing them every attention, and they, on their part, did not do anything that would be a source of anxiety and distress to me. When I went out riding anywhere they stayed at home.

" It happened that my good wife one day went to the bath ; on coming into the *diwankhana* she saw no male present there, and hence removed her veil ; perhaps my second brother was lying down there awake ; as soon as he saw her he fell in love with her. He spoke to my eldest brother, and the couple entered into a plot to put me to death. I had not the least idea that they had formed

such a diabolical plan. On the contrary, I used to say to myself, ‘ Heaven be thanked that this time, as yet, they have not done anything like what they used to do before ; their conduct is now faultless ; perhaps they have experienced the influence of shame.’ One day, after dinner, my eldest brother began to weep and to praise our native land, and to expatiate upon the beauties of Persia. On hearing this, the other commenced sobbing. I said, ‘ If you wish to go back to our native land, it is well ; I am at your disposal, and it is also my own wish. Now, if God pleases I will accompany you.’ I spoke to my wife of the dejection of my two brothers, and also of my own intentions. That wise woman answered, ‘ you may harbour such an impression ; but they again intend to commit some villainy towards you, they are the enemies of your life ; you have reared a couple of snakes in your bosom, and you believe in their sincerity and friendship. Act just as you choose, but beware of those who want to do you an injury.’ In short, I had made my preparations for the journey before long and pitched the tents on the plain. A great caravan assembled, and they agreed to make me their chief and leader. Having fixed upon a propitious moment, we set out ; but I on my part was on the alert against my brothers. I carried out their wishes in every respect. I sought to please them in every way. One day, just as we had reached the stage, my second brother said, ‘ One league from this place there is a running spring like the celestial fountain known as *Salsabil*, and in the contiguous plain, for miles around, lilies and tulips and narcissuses, and roses, grow wild. Truly, it is a charming place to walk in ; if we had our will, we would go there to-morrow, and amuse our minds by contemplating the sight, and get over our fatigues’. I replied, ‘ You are masters here ; if you desire we will halt to-morrow, and, having repaired to the spot, we will stroll about, and enjoy ourselves.’ They answered ‘ Nothing can be better.’ I gave orders, saying, ‘ Let it be proclaimed throughout the caravan that there will be a halt to-morrow ;’ and I told my cook to prepare breakfast of dishes of every variety for next day, as we should go out on an excursion of pleasure. When the morning dawned, these two brothers dressed themselves, and, having put on their arms, reminded me of the intended excursion, saying, ‘ Make haste please, so that we may reach there while it is yet cool and pleasant, and enjoy our walk.’

“ I ordered my horse, but they interrupted me by the remark, ‘ The pleasure which one experiences by contemplating a charming place one foot, can never be enjoyed on

horse-back. Tell the grooms to lead the horses after us.' Two slaves, bearing the smoking-pipes and coffee-pots, went along with us. On the road, we beguiled our time by shooting arrows, and when we were at some distance from the caravan, they sent one of the slaves on some business.

" Proceeding farther, they sent the other to call back the former. As ill fate would have it, I did not in the least protest against this conduct. It seemed as if somebody had put the seal of silence on my lips; they had entirely their own way, and having kept me engaged in conversation, they led me on; this dog, however, remained with me. When we had gone a considerable distance, neither fountain nor gardens were visible. All that I could see was a plain overgrown with thorns. There I had a call for making water, and sat down to answer it. I saw behind me something like the flash of a sword, and as I turned to look, my second brother gave me such a sword cut, that my skull was nearly cleft in two. Before I could say, 'O barbarous man! why dost thou kill me,' my eldest brother struck me a blow on the shoulder. Both the wounds were severe, and I reeled and fell; then these two monsters of cruelty mutilated me to their heart's content, and left me weltering in my blood. This dog seeing how I was being dealt with, rushed at them, and they wounded him likewise. After this, they, with their own hands, inflicted on themselves some slight wounds, ran back to the encampment with bare feet and heads, and cried out, 'Some robbers have killed our brother on that plain, and we ourselves, having fought and struggled with them, have become wounded. Set off as quickly as possible; otherwise they will immediately attack the caravan and strip us bare off all we possess.' When the people of the caravan heard the name of *beduins* (Arab robbers) they were confounded and bewildered, and overcome with fright, marched off and made their escape.

' My wife had already heard from me of the antecedents and extraordinary virtues of these brothers of mine, and of all the villainy they had practised towards me; hearing now from these liars of this occurrence, she instantly put an end to her life by plunging a dagger in her heart, and made over her soul to her Creator,

" *O Darweshes!* when the Khawaja* had thus far related his history and misfortunes, I could not help bursting into a flood of tears. The merchant, seeing my grief, said, ' Mighty King, if it were not a want of respect, I would

*Here King Azad Bakht speaks in his own person, and addresses his audience, the four *Darweshes*.

take off all my clothes and show the whole of my body. In spite of this, to prove his veracity, he tore his dress off his shoulders, and showed that part of his person to us. In truth, there was not the space of four fingers on this part of the body which was free from, wounds; and he removed his turban before me from his head, and there was, such a big dint in his skull that an entire pomegranate would fit into it. All the nobles and courtiers present closed their eyes, they could not endure to contemplate the shocking sight.

“ The Khwaja then proceeded with his narrative, ‘ Blessed Monarch. when these brothers, as they thought had finished their work and gone away, on one side I lay weltering in my blood, and on the other the dog lay covered with wounds near me. I lost such a quantity of blood from my body that I had not the least strength or consciousness left in me, and I cannot for the life of me understand why death did not supervene. The place where I lay was on the confines of the kingdom of Ceylon, and a very populous city was adjacent to it ; in that city there was a pagoda, and the Monarch of the country had a daughter remarkable for her loveliness and beauty.

“ Many kings and princes were deeply enamoured of her. There existed no customs there, enjoining the women to remain shut up in the seraglio, and consequently the Princess used to spend the whole day in strolling about or hunting with her playmates. Not far from the spot where I lay, there was the King’s garden. Roaming about for the sake of recreation, she happened to come on that plain. She had with her several mounted attendants ; these came to the spot where I lay, and hearing my groans they stopped near me. Seeing me in the condition I was, they galloped up to the Princess, and told her that a miserable dog and a man were lying close by weltering in their own blood. On receiving this news from her attendants, the Princess in person came near me, and distressed at the sight, said, ‘ See if any life still remains.’ Two or three of the attendants alighted from their horses and, after having examined me, answered, ‘ He still breaths.’ The Princess at once ordered me to be carefully laid on a carpet and conveyed to the garden.

“ When they had brought me there, the Princess, having summoned the Royal Surgeon, gave him strict injunctions respecting the cure of myself and my dog, and held out to him hopes of a reward and gratuity. The Surgeon carefully wiped my whole body, cleaned it from blood and dust and, having washed the wounds with spirits, stitched

them and put on plasters, and he ordered *bed mushk* to be poured down my throat instead of water. The Princess herself used to sit at the head of my bed, and to see that I was properly nursed ; and two and three times in the course of a day and night she would give me, with her own hands some soup or *sharbat* to drink. At last when I had recovered consciousness I heard the Princess exclaim with sorrow, ‘ What blood-thirsty tyrant has practised such barbarity towards thee? Was not he afraid of even the great idol ? * After ten days, through the strengthening influence and efficacy of the spirit of the *musk* willow, *sharbat* and electuaries, I opened my eyes, and saw as if the whole Court of Indra were assembled around me ; the Princess was standing at the head of my bed. I heaved a deep sigh, and wished to move myself but through want of strength found myself inadequate to the effort.

“ The Princess said in a kindly tone, ‘ O Persian ! be easy in thy mind, and do not distress thyself ; though some inhuman tyrant has treated thee thus ; yet the great idol made me kind to thee, and thou wilt now be restored to health.’

“ I swear that God, who is one and without a partner, that, on seeing her, I again became senseless ; the Princess perceived it, and with her own fair hands she sprinkled me with rose-water out of a phial filled with the scented liquid. In twenty days, my wounds filled up and granulated ; the Princess would come regularly at night when all were asleep and after supplying me with food and drink, go away. In short, after the expiration of forty days, I performed the bath of recovery. The Princess felt extremely happy at my recovery, bestowed a handsome reward on the Surgeon and had me attired in an elegant dress. By the grace of God, and through the care and exertion of the Princess, I became strong and healthy and my body became stout ; the dog also grew fat. She made me drink wine every day, listened to my conversation, and felt pleased. I too would entertain her by relating to her a short story or a startling tale.

“ One day, she said to me, ‘ Pray, relate to me the past events of your life, and tell me who you are and how you came to be involved in such a calamity?’ I gave her a circumstantial account of my adventures from beginning to end. On hearing this she burst into tears, and observed, ‘ I will now treat thee so that thou wilt forget all thy past misfortunes.’ I answered, ‘ Heaven preserve you ; you have

*The representative of the Divine power in that land of heathens.

obtained for me a fresh lease of life ; I am now entirely yours ; for God's sake, show the same favours to me always.' In short, she would sit with me alone the whole night, and keep my company ; occasionally the nurse would likewise stay with her, and she would pass the time in hearing my stories and in relating some herself. When the Princess would go away, I finding myself alone would perform my ablutions and, concealing myself in a corner, would say my prayers.

"One day, it so happened, that the Princess had gone to her father, and I, having performed my ablutions, was saying my prayers, with my mind free from all apprehension as to intrusion, when, all of a sudden, the Princess walked in saying, 'Let us see what the Persian is now doing ; we shall know whether he is asleep or awake'. As she did not find me in the room, she was surprised and cried out, 'Hallow ! where is he gone ? surely he has fallen in love with some one.' She began to look and search for me in every nook and corner, and at last she came to the very spot where I was praying. She had never seen a Muhammadan at prayers. She stood silent, and kept looking on. When I had done praying and raised my hands heavenwards to bless God, and prostrated myself she burst into a loud laugh, and said, 'What ! has this man gone crazy ?'

"On hearing the sound of her laughter, I felt alarmed. The Princess, coming forward, asked, 'O Persian ! what was it thou wast doing ?' I could make no answer, on which the nurse said, 'May I take the calamities upon me and become thy sacrifice ! It seems to me that this individual is a Muhammadan, and the enemy of Lat and Manat*; he worships an invisible Deity. As soon as the Princess heard these words, she struck her hands together and, becoming greatly incensed, said, 'I was not aware he was a Turk† and an unbeliever in our gods, and that it was this why he had fallen under the displeasure of our idols ; I did wrong to save him.' Having said these words, she walked away. On hearing her words, I was stupefied and said within myself, 'Let me see how she behaves towards me now.' Through fear sleep left me, and until morning I kept weeping bitterly, bathing my face with tears.

"I passed three days and nights between fear and hope. I had not a wink of sleep during this time. On the third‡ night the Princess, in company with her nurse, came to my room flushed with the effects of wine. She

* The two great idols worshipped by the Pagans in former times.

† A general name for a Musalman among the southern Hindus.

‡ Should have said, fourth.

was in a great wrath, and with bow and arrows in her hand, she sat down outside my apartment on the edge of the *parterre*. She asked the nurse for a cup of wine, and having quaffed off its contents, she said, 'O nurse ! is that Persian who has incurred the wrath of our great idol, dead, or is he yet alive ?' The nurse said, 'May I take thy calamities upon me ! some life still remains'. The Princess said, 'He has fallen in my regards, but bid him come out' The nurse called me ; I ran out and saw that the Princess's face was glowing with anger, and had become red as a live coal. My soul seemed to have departed from my body ; I bowed to her, and with my hands folded, stood before her in silent respect. Darting at me an angry look, she said to the nurse, 'If I kill this enemy of our faith with an arrow, will the great idol pardon me or not ? I have committed a great sin in keeping him in my house, and in attending to his wants.' The nurse replied 'What is the Princess's fault ? You had not the remotest idea that he was the enemy of your religion when you kept him in your house ; you took pity on him, and will receive good for the good you have done him ; and this man will receive from the great idol the reward of his wickedness' On these words, the Princess said, 'Nurse, tell him to sit down.' The nurse motioned me to take my seat, which I accordingly did. The Princess drank another cup of wine, and said to the nurse, 'Let this wretch have also a cup, so that he may be killed with ease.' The nurse presented me a cup, which I drank without making the slightest excuse, and made a bow, so as to thank the Princess ; she never looked at me directly, but kept looking at me askance. When I became elated with the effects of the wine, I began to repeat verses, among which I repeated this couplet also :—

I am in thy power, and if still alive, what then ?
Under the sword, if one breathes a while, what then ?

"On hearing this, she smiled and, looking towards the nurse, she said, 'What, art thou sleepy ? The nurse, divining her motive, said, 'Yes, sleep is overpowering me.' She took her leave, and bent her feet towards her cursed abode. After a moment, the Princess asked me for a cup of wine. I quickly filled it, and carried it before her, she took it gracefully from my hand, and quaffed the contents ; I then dropped at her feet ; she passed her hand kindly over me and said, 'O ignorant man ! what hast thou seen wanting in our great idol that thou hast commenced worshipping an invisible God ?' I replied, 'Justice ought to be our motto ; pray, reflect a little, and you will come to the conclusion that that God alone is worthy of being worshipped, who

out of a drop of water, has produced a charming creature like thee, and hast bestowed upon thee such beauty and comeliness that in one moment thou canst distract the hearts of thousands of men. Is a contemptible thing like an image worthy of being worshipped by a human being ? 'The sculptors have shaped a block of stone into a figure and made a trap of it to catch the fools. Those whom Satan leads astray mistake the created for the Creator ; and they bend their heads in homage before what their own hands have cut into shape. We are Muhammadans, and we adore Him, who has given us being. For the deluded idol worshipper, He hath created hell, and for us true believers. He hath made paradise ; if you believe in one God, you will entitle yourself to the enjoyment of heavenly pleasures, and distinguish truth from falsehood, and you will perceive that your present creed is based on error.'

At last on hearing such reasonings, the heart of that stoney-hearted fairy became softened ; by the favour and mercy of God, she commenced weeping and said, ' Well initiate me in your religion also. I taught her the creed which she repeated with a sincere heart and, having expressed penitence and asked forgiveness, she entered the fold of Muhammadanism. I then fell at her feet to thank her for having embraced the true faith. Until morning, she kept repeating this creed and praying for pardon. Again she said, ' Well, I have accepted your religion, but my parents are infidels ; what remedy is there for them ?'

" I replied, leave them to their fate ; as one acts so will he be rewarded.' She said, ' They 'have betrothed me to my uncle's son, and he is an idolator ; if the marriage were to take place to-morrow, which God forbid, he an idolator would claim the privileges of a husband, which, I should conceive, would be a dreadful calamity. We should immediately adopt measures in connection with this, so that the impending catastrophe may be averted. I answered 'What you say is consistent with reason ; do whatever you think advisable under the circumstances.' She said, ' I will stay here no longer, but will go forth somewhere else.' I enquired, 'How will you manage to escape, and where will you go ?' She answered, ' In the first place do you go away from here, and put up with the Musalmans at the inn, so that all the people may hear of it and may not suspect you. While there, look out for vessels leaving the port, and whenever you see a vessel bound for Persia, let me know ; to communicate with you, I will send my nurse to you frequently, and when you send me word that everything is ready, I will hasten to you and, having em-

barked on board a vessel, I will make my escape and thus obtain my release from the hands of these cursed infidels. I answered, 'I sacrifice myself on your dear life and your strength of faith, but how will you dispose of the nurse ? Nothing so easy, she replied, 'I will administer to her a cup of deadly poison.' This plan was fixed upon; and when the morning dawned, I repaired to the inn, and having hired a room, took up my lodgings therein. During this period of separation I only lived in the hope of meeting the beloved Princess again. Two months after we had settled our plan, the merchants of Rum, Syria and Ispahān assembled together. Most of them had become acquainted with me, and, addressing me, they said, 'Well, sir, are you going with us ? —how long will you stay in this land of idolators?' I answered, 'What have I got to take to my native country ? All my property consists of a female slave a dog and a chest ; if you could give me a little place to sit in, and fix the passage-money, I shall then be easy in my mind, and embark likewise.' The merchants assigned me a cabin, and I paid the passage money in full. Having made my mind easy on this score, I went to the nurse's house under some pretext, and said, 'O mother, I have come to bid thee farewell, for I am now going back to my country ; if, through thy favour, I could see the Princess for a moment I should feel very happy.' Being pressed, the nurse at last acceded to my request. I said, 'I will be back at night, and will stand waiting for the Princess in such and such a place.' 'All right,' she replied. Having made this engagement, I returned to the inn, and, having conveyed my box and bedding on board the ship, and consigned them to the care of the Captain, said, 'To-morrow morning I will bring my slave girl on board.' The Captain said, 'Be early, for we shall weigh anchor to-morrow morning.' I promised to do what I was desired to. When the night set in I repaired to the place agreed upon with the nurse, and there waited for the Princess. When a watch of the night had passed, the door of the palace opened, and the Princess attired in soiled and dirty garments, and holding a casket of jewels in her hand, came out. She made over the casket to me, and went along with me. By the time it was morning, we were standing on the sea-shore ; and getting into a skiff, we went on board the ship ; this faithful dog was also with me. When it was broad daylight, we weighed anchor and started. We were sailing along with our minds at ease, when the sound of the discharge of guns from one of the ports reached our ears. All on board were surprised and alarmed. We moored the ship, and began to question each other, saying, 'What !

will the Governor of the port practise some treachery towards us ? What can be the cause of the firing of these guns ?'

" It happened that all the merchants had beautiful female slaves with them on board, and fearing lest the Governor of the port should take them by force, they all shut them up in their chests. I, too, followed the example of the rest, and having seated her in my chest, I locked it up. In the meanwhile the Governor of the port, accompanied by his servants and attendants, appeared in sight on board a swift sailing vessel, and rapidly gained upon us. He came and boarded our ship. The reason of his coming to us perhaps was traceable to the sudden death of the nurse and the disappearance of the Princess. The news of these events must have reached the King in due course and, he being ashamed to mention the name of the Princess, must have sent orders to the Governor of the Port to this effect : I have heard that the Persian merchants have very handsome slave girls with them, and I wish to purchase some for the Princess ; you will stop them and bring all the slaves that may be on board the ship into my presence ; when I see them, I will pay the price in full of such as may be approved of, and the rest shall be sent back.'

" It was, no doubt, in accordance with the King's orders that the Governor of the port came in person on our ship to take away the slaves. Near my cabin was the berth of another man ; he, too, had a beautiful female slave shut up in his chest. The Governor of the port sat on the same chest and began to collect all the slave-girls that were forthcoming. I offered thanks to the Almighty, saying, ' Well, no mention has been made of the Princess.'

" In short, the Governor's men conveyed on board their own vessel all the slave-girls that could be found, and the Governor laughingly enquired of the owner of the chest on which he was sitting ' Hadst thou not a slave-girl, too ? ' The stupid fellow got frightened and replied, ' I swear by your worship's feet, I alone have not acted in this manner ; all of us, through fear of you, have shut up our pretty slave-girls in our chests.' On hearing this, the Governor began to minutely search all the chests. He opened my chest too, and, having taken out the Princess, took her away with the rest. A strange sort of despair seized hold of my soul, and I said to myself, ' Such a dreadful thing has happened that my life is forfeited for nothing, and now let us see how he deals with the Princess ? ' In my anxiety for her safety, I completely forgot all fear of my own life ; the whole day and night

continued praying to God to spare her. When the next morning arrived, they brought back all the slave-girls in, their own vessel. The merchants felt extremely rejoiced and each took back his own female slave. All returned, but the Princess alone was not to be seen among them. I asked, ‘ What is the reason that my slave has not come back ? ’ They replied, ‘ We don’t know ; possibly she has taken the King’s fancy ’ All the merchants began to console and comfort me and said, ‘ Well, what has happened, has happened ; do not distress yourself, we will all subscribe her price and make it over to you.’ My senses vanished, and I said, ‘ I will not go to Persia now.’ Then, turning to the boatmen, I said, ‘ O friends, take me also with you, and put me on the shore.’ They consented, and I, having left the vessel, got into the boat ; the dog also came along with me.

“ I arrived at the port I kept to myself only the casket of jewels which the Princess had brought with her ; the rest of my property I distributed among the Governor’s servants. I wandered everywhere in search of the lost Princess, to obtain, if possible, some intelligence of her, but I could not obtain the slightest clue, nor could I get the remotest hint regarding the affair. One day, I managed to enter the royal palace by the help of a stratagem, and searched for her, but got no information For nearly a whole month, I sifted every lane and quarter of the city and, through grief, I almost brought myself to the verge of the grave, and began to wander about like a maniac. At last, the idea flashed across my mind that my Princess must be in all probability in the house of the Governor, and in no other place I went round, and closely examined the Governor’s house, with the view to discover some passage by which I might effect entrance into it

“ I saw a drain, high and wide enough to allow a man to go in and out, but its mouth was blocked up by an iron grating. I made up my mind to enter the house by means of the drain, and with this purpose took off my clothes, and went down into that receptacle of filth and dirt. After endless trouble, I succeeded in breaking the grating and entered the private seraglio through the drain. Then, assuming the disguise of a woman, I began to search in every direction. From one of the chambers a sound reached my ears, as if somebody was at his prayers. Moving towards the place, I perceived it was the Princess, who was weeping bitterly and kneeling before her Maker, and addressing Him in these words ‘ For the sake of the

prophet and his pure descendants, deliver me from this land of pagans and enable me to meet once more in safety the man who instructed me in the tenets of Islam.' On seeing her, I ran and fell at her feet. The Princess embraced me, and for a moment the state of insensibility came upon us. When we recovered our senses, I enquired of the Princess how she had fared since we parted. She replied. ' When the Governor carried all the slaves on shore, I was praying to the Almighty to so order things in His mercy that my secret might not be divulged, and that I might not be identified, and that your life might not be endangered. He is so great a concealer of our secrets that nobody recognized me to be the Princess. The Governor was examining every one with the intention of buying some for his own harem ; when it came to my turn, he selected me, and had me conveyed secretly to his house ; the rest he presented the King.

" My father missed me among these slaves, and hence dismissed them all. This stratagem had been resorted to simply on my account. The King now gives out that the Princess is dangerously ill, and if I am not soon found, then ere long the news of my death will fly through the whole kingdom, and the King will be spared the disgrace and dishonour, which must otherwise overtake him. But I am now in great trouble, for the Governor has other designs upon me, and wishes to share my bed. I refuse to comply with his desire, but inasmuch as he really doats on me, he has all this time waited for my acquiescence , and is, consequently, silent and quiet, but I am afraid that matters cannot always go on in this way, and hence I have resolved within myself, that when he attempts anything else, I shall put an end to my life with my own hand. But now that I have met thee, another idea has suggested itself to me ; may Heaven help us ; except by resorting to the course I have thought of, I see no other way for escape.'

" I answered, ' Let us hear it, what sort of plan is it. She said, ' If you try and exert yourself, it can be carried through.' I said. ' I am ready to do whatever you may order me to ; I would jump into the burning flames, if such were your desire— Aye! I would for your sake ascend to the sky itself if I could find a ladder sufficiently long for the purpose ; in short, I would attempt anything at your command.' The Princess said, ' Repair then to the temple of the great idol, and in the place where they take off their shoes, lies a piece of coarse black canvas. It is the custom of the country, that whoever becomes poor and indigent

wraps himself up in the canvas, and sits down in the place where it lies. The people of the city, who go to the temple to offer their adorations, bestow upon him something each according to his respective means. In three or four days, he succeeds in collecting a certain amount of money and the head priests, having presented him with a rich dress from the treasury of the great idol, dismiss him. The recipient thus becomes a rich man and goes away, and nobody knows who he was. Do thou go there also, and sit under that canvas, and completely conceal thy hands and face, and preserve absolute silence. After three days, when the priests and idolators, bestowing on thee a rich dress, wish to dismiss thee, do thou on no account rise from that place. When they beg and entreat thee, do thou tell them, 'I do not want money, nor am I greedy of wealth; I am a wronged man and have come to complain; if the mother of the Brahmans redresses my wrongs, well and good; else the great idol will do me justice, and will attend to my complaints against the tyrant who has oppressed me so cruelly.' As long as the mother of the Brahmans does not personally come to thee, do thou remain inflexible, howmuchsoever they may entreat thee. At last, seeing no other alternative, she will herself come to thee. She is greatly advanced in years, for she is one hundred and forty years old; and six and thirty sons, that have been born of her, are the superintendents of the temple, and in the estimation of the great idol, she possesses a high rank. For this reason she wields such unlimited power that all the high and low of this country consider her order as fraught with happiness to whom or in respect of whom it is given; whatever she commands they carry out with all their heart and soul. Take hold of the hem of her garment, and say, 'O mother if you do not make the inhuman tyrant redress the wrong he has done to this oppressed traveller, I will dash my head before the great idol; he will at last have pity on me, and speak to you in my behalf.'

" When, after this, the mother of the Brahmans asks thee all the circumstances connected with thy complaint, thou wilt then say, 'I am an inhabitant of Persia, I have come here from a great distance to do homage and worship to the great idol, and also in consequence of having heard the fame of your justice. For some days I lived in peace; my wife had also come with me, she is in the prime of her life, her form and figure are superb and her features faultless and perfect.

" I cannot say how the Governor of the port saw her but he took her away from me by force, and has shut her

up in his house. And it is a rule with us *Musalmans* that if a stranger sees one of our wives or seizes her forcibly, it is lawful for the wronged husband to destroy the stranger in whatever way he can, to recover possession of his wife ; if the wronged party cannot accomplish this, we must give up eating and drinking, for as long as the stranger is alive, the wife is forbidden to her husband. Now being utterly helpless, I have come here, let me see what justice you do to me.' When the Princess had fully drilled me up in what I was to say, I bade her adieu for a time, and came out by the same drain, and carefully replaced the iron grating. As soon as it was morning, I repaired to the temple, and having put on the coarse black canvas, I sat down. In three days' time, so many gold and silver coins and articles of dress were collected round me that they formed a tremendous heap. On the fourth day, the priests singing hymns and accompanied by a band, came to me with a robe of honour, and wished to dismiss me. I would not agree to it, and appealed to the great idol for help, saying, 'I have not come to beg, but to obtain justice from the great idol and the mother of the Brahmans; and, until justice is done to me, I will not move from this place.' On hearing my resolve, they repaired to the presence of the old woman and reported my case ; after this a Brahman came to me, and said, 'Come, the mother is waiting for you.' I forthwith wrapped myself in the coarse black canvas from head to foot, and went up to the entrance of the temple. I perceived that the idol was placed on a jewelled throne, studded with rubies, diamonds, pearls, and corals ; and a magnificent carpet was spread on a gold chair, on which sat, with great pomp and dignity, an ancient dame, clothed in black, with pillows and cushions supporting her, and near her stood two boys, of ten and twelve years respectively, one on her right and the other on her left. She summoned me before her ; I advanced with the profoundest respect, and kissed the foot of the throne, and then laid hold of the skirt of her robe. She asked me to state my case, and I stated it precisely as the Princess had instructed me to do.

"On hearing it, she said, 'What ! do the Musalmans keep their wives concealed ?' I answered, 'Yes, may your children live in peace and prosperity ! it is an ancient custom of ours.' She said, 'I like your religion ; I will forthwith issue orders, that the Governor of the port, together with thy wife, shall present themselves before me, and I shall inflict such punishment on that ass that he will not repeat such conduct in future, and all shall prick up their ears, and quake with fear.' She asked her attendants

‘ Who is the Governor of the port ? How does he seize forcibly the wife of another man ? ’ They answered, ‘ He is such a one ’ On hearing his name, she thus spoke to the boys who stood near her, ‘ Take this man along with you, and forthwith repair to the King and say, ‘ The mother declares that this is the order of the great idol that inasmuch as the Governor of the port exercises great tyranny and oppression on the people, for example, he has forcibly seized this poor man’s wife, and his guilt is proved, therefore let a list of the property and belongings of that impious one be quickly made out, and let them be made over to this Turk, who has shown himself worthy of my favour and regard ; otherwise you will incur our displeasure and perish to-night.’ The two boys got up, came out of the place, and mounted the horses ; all the priests blowing their conches and singing hymns went in their escort In short the high and low of the country, regarding the dust of the place with which the feet of the two boys came in contact as sacred, would take it up and apply it to their eyes. Thus attended, they went to the palace of the King. He heard of it, and came out barefoot to give them a reception, and, having conducted them with great honour and respect, seated them on the throne near himself and said, ‘ How have I been fortunate enough to receive a visit from you to-day ? ’ The two Brahman youths related what they had been told by the mother, and threatened him with the great idol’s vengeance.

“ On hearing this, the King said, ‘ Very well ’ ; and gave orders to his attendant saying, ‘ Let some of the royal officers go and bring, without any loss of time, the Governor of the Port, along the woman, into our presence so that having ascertained the nature and extent of his crime, I may punish him as he deserves.’ On hearing this order, I was extremely frightened in my heart, and said to myself, ‘ The affair has taken a very disagreeable turn ; for if the Governor of the Port is brought here with the Princess, everything will be discovered ; what will become of me then ? ’ Being extremely alarmed in my mind, I appealed to Heaven for assistance, but my countenance was overspread with a death-like pallor, and my body began to shake with fear. The boys perceiving my colour change, perhaps concluded that the order was not agreeable to my wishes ; they instantly got up, incensed and enraged, and exclaimed in their sternest tones, ‘ O wretch, art thou gone crazy, that thou hesitatatest to implicitly carry out the great idol’s order, and dost thou consider what we said to be untrue that thou wishest to summon them to verify our statement ? Now thou hast incurred the great idol’s dis-

pleasure ; we have delivered his commands to thee, it is thine duty to obey them ; if thou failest to do what the great idol desires, he will know how to deal with thee.' On hearing these words, the King was extremely alarmed; folding his hands, he stood before the youths, and trembled from head to foot. He indulged in abject entreaties and supplications to pacify them ; but the boys would not resume their seats, and remained standing. In the meantime, all the nobles and grandies, who were present, began unanimously to speak ill of the Governor, saying, ' He is a base-born, tyrannical, and evil-minded fellow, and he commits acts of such violence and oppression that we cannot relate the same in the King's presence. Whatever the mother of the Brahmans has sent word of, is absolutely correct ; being the decision of the great idol, how can it be possibly false ?' When the King heard the report of the Head Priestess corroborated by all, he was overwhelmed with shame, and sorry at what he had said. He instantly bestowed upon me a rich dress and, having written an order with his own hand, and sealed* with his sign manual, he delivered it to me ; he also penned a note to the mother of the Brahmans, and, having presented the boys with trays of precious stones and gold pieces, he dismissed them. I returned to the temple, extremely rejoiced, and went to the old woman.

" The contents of the letter, addressed by the King to the High Priestess, were these : After the customary forms of address, and tones of devotion and service, the Monarch had written, ' Agreeably to the orders of Your Holiness the situation of the Governor of the Port has been conferred on this Musalman, and a dress of honour has been presented to him. He is now at liberty to put the former Governor to death, and all his property and wealth now belongs to this *Musalman*, who may dispose of it just as he pleases. I am confident that my fault will be pardoned.' The mother of the Brahmans was pleased with the letter and said, ' Let them strike up music in the orchestra attached to the pagoda.' Then she gave me an escort of five hundred soldiers, all well armed, and expert marksmen with the *match lock* † and gave them orders to go to the port, arrest the Governor, and hand him over to me, in order that I might put him to death with whatever tortures I should choose. She further told them that except

*Oriental sovereigns do not sign their names, but put their seals to letters, bonds, &c.; on these seals are engraved their names, titles, and so forth.

† Literally who could hit a *kamr* suspended by a hair.

myself, the honoured *Musalman*, no one was to enter the Governor's seraglio, and that they must deliver to 'the new Governor) all his property and wealth untouched. When he sends you back of his own will and pleasure,' he added, 'you must obtain from him a letter of approbation, and return to me.' Having presented me with a full dress from the treasury of the great idol, she desired me to mount and dismissed me.

"When I reached the port, one of my men, going ahead of the cavalcade, informed the Governor that he had been superseded. He was sitting like one utterly confounded and bewildered, when I arrived ; my heart was already filled with rage, and no sooner did I see the Governor, than I unsheathed my sword, and dealt him such a blow on the neck that his head flew clean off like the stalk of an Indian corn. Then having commanded the agents of the treasuries, the inspectors and superintendents and other officials to be seized, I took possession of all the records, and entered the seraglio. There I met my beloved Princess, we embraced each other with all the tenderness of true lovers, and wept and offered our grateful thanks to God ; and took my seat on the *masnad* and bestowed robes of honour on the port officials and reinstated them in their different situations.

"To the servants and slaves I gave promotion. To the people who had come in my retinue from the temple, I gave rewards and presents and having bestowed dresses on their Lieutenants and Captains, I dismissed them. A week after this having taken with me costly jewels, and pieces of fine clothes, shawls and brocades and goods and curiosities of every clime and a considerable sum of money as a *present** for the King, and suitable presents for nobles of every rank and gradation, as well as for priests and priestesses to be divided among them, I went to the temple and laid my offerings before the mother of the Brahmans.

"She gave me another dress of honour and a title. Then having proceeded to the royal court, I laid my *pesh-kash* before the King. I spoke to His Majesty on the best means of counteracting the evil effects of the cruelties and oppressions which the former Governor of the Port had practised. For this reason, the King, the nobles and the merchants were all highly pleased with me, and His Majesty showed me many kindnesses and, having bestowed on me a robe of honour and a horse, he conferred on me a title and

* The *Nazar* or *Peshkash* is a sum of money, &c., which all Asiatic officers pay to their superiors—kings and nobles.

a *jagir*,* with other dignities and distinctions. When I withdrew from the royal presence, I gave the servants and attendants such liberal gratuities that they all lauded my munificence and began to pray for my welfare. To be brief, I was happy in the condition in which circumstances had placed me, and I passed my days in extreme comfort and bliss, after marrying the Princess; and I offered my grateful thanks to Heaven for the felicity which I enjoyed. The inhabitants of the place and my subordinates were happy and contented in consequence of my impartiality and strict regard for justice; and once a month I used to visit the temple and attend the King's levee; His Majesty, from time to time, heaped upon me fresh honors and distinctions.

"At last, he made me one of his confidential advisers, and he did nothing without consulting me. My life began to pass in indescribable peace and tranquility, but God only knows that I often thought of these two brothers, and was anxious to obtain information regarding their whereabouts, and the circumstances they were in. After a period of two years, a caravan of merchants arrived at the port from the country of Zairbad, and they were one and all going to Persia. They were desirous of returning to their country by sea. It was the custom at the port, that whenever a caravan arrived there, its chiefs would bring to me curiosities and rarities of every clime, and offer them to me as presents.

"On the following day I would go to the place where the chief had put up, take one-tenth of his goods by way of duty and grant him permission to depart. Naturally, the merchants of the caravan from Zairbad also came to wait upon me, and brought with them presents of inestimable value. The following day I went to their tents, when I saw two men clothed in rags, who, bringing bundles and packages on their heads, deposited them right before me. After I had seen the bundles and packages, they carried them back; they toiled hard, and were in constant attendance upon us.

"When I looked at them closely, I perceived they were undoubtedly my two brothers. At that moment, shame and pride would not suffer me to see them engaged in such low and menial offices. On reaching home, I ordered my attendants to bring those two men to me; when they brought them, I had fresh suits of clothes made

* Land given by Government as a reward for service; a pension in land, a fief.

for them, and kept them near me. But these incorrigible villains again entered into a plot to murder me in cold blood. One day at midnight, finding all off their guard, they stole after the manner of thieves to the head of my bed. I, through fear for my life, had placed a guard at my door, and this faithful animal was sleeping under my couch ; when they drew their swords from the scabbard the dog gave a howl and then attacked them ; the noise he made awoke all ; I too, alarmed, started up. The guards instantly arrested them, and I could see they were my precious brothers. All began to shower curses upon them, and saying, ' In spite of all the kindness and attention that has been shown them, what monsters of ingratitude they have proved themselves by behaving in this fashion.'

" O King (peace be upon you !) I also became alarmed of my life. There is a well known proverb, ' The first and the second fault may be pardoned, but the third* ought to be punished.' I then formed a resolution in my mind of keeping them confined ; but if I had put them in prison who would have looked after them ? They might have died of hunger and thirst, or they might have committed some other villainy. For this reason I have confined them in a cage, that they may always be under my own eyes, and my mind be at ease ; lest being absent from my sight, they may commit further mischief. The respect and attention which I show to this dog, are the reward of its loyalty and fidelity. O God ! an ungrateful man is worse than a faithful brute. This was the history of my life which I have related to Your Majesty You may now put to death, or grant me my life; it all rests with you '

On hearing this narrative, It praised that brave and generous man, and said, your kindness and forbearance have been unbounded, and there have been no limits to the shamelessness and villainy of these fellows. True it is that if you were to bury a dog's tail for twelve years, it would still remain as crooked as ever.‡ After this, I asked the Khwaja how he had come by the twelve rubies which were on the dog's collar. The Khwaja said, " May Your Majesty live upto a hundred and twenty years ! After I had been the harbour-master of the port for three or four years, I was seated one day on the balcony of my palace, which was very high, and, for the purpose of enjoying the sights of the sea and the forest, was looking in every

* Literally, the third fault is that of the mother.

† King Azad Bakht now again addresses the Darwishes in his own person.

‡ Answering to the English proverb, 'What is bred in the bone will never get out of the flesh.'

direction. All of a sudden, something like two human figures, who were treading along one side of the forest, where there was no high road, became visible. Taking a telescope I looked at them, and perceived they were men of a strange appearance ; I at once sent off some messengers to bring them to me.

" When they came, I found that they were a male and a female. I sent the woman in the seraglio to the Princess and summoned the man into my presence. I saw he was a young man, some twenty or twenty-two years old, whose beard and moustaches had just begun to grow, but, through the sun's heat, his face had become black as a baking pan. The hair of his head and the nails of his fingers were grown long, and he had come to bear a striking resemblance to the men of the woods. He bore on his shoulders a boy of three or four years of age, and two sleeves of a coat, filled with something, were thrown like a collar round his neck ; he had altogether a strange appearance, and was curiously dressed. I was very much surprised, and asked ' O friend, who art thou, of what country art thou the inhabitant, and how hast thou come to be in the state I find thee in ? ' The young man began to weep involuntarily. Removing the two filled sleeves around his neck, he put them before me, and cried out ' Hunger ! hunger ! for God's sake let me have something to eat ; for a long time I have lived upon roots and herbs, and have not the least strength left in me.' I instantly sent for some bread, roast meat, and wine, for him ; he began to devour them.

" In the meantime, an eunuch brought from the seraglio some more purses, which he found on the stranger's wife. I had them all opened, and saw that they were filled with precious stones of every description, each of which was equal in value to the revenue of a kingdom ; each was superior to the other in point of shape, weight and brilliancy, and from the various coloured rays omitted by them, the whole room became illuminated with variegated colours. When the youth had eaten some bread, and drunk a cup of wine and refreshed himself a little, his senses returned ; I then asked him, ' Where did you get these precious stones from ? ' He answered, ' My native land is Azarbaijan ;* I got separated from my family and parents in my childhood, and underwent many hardships ; I was for a long time buried alive, and have many times escaped from the clutches of the angels of death.' ' Pray young man,' said I, ' give me the details, so that I may have a clear idea of your past history.'

* A Province of Persia, the northern part of ancient India.

" Upon this he began to relate his adventures as follows :—" My father was a merchant by profession, and he used to travel constantly to Hindustan, Ram, China, Khata* and Europe. When I was ten years old, he resolved upon undertaking a journey to Hindustan, and he wished to take me with him. My mother and my various aunts protested that I was yet a child, and not of age to travel, but my father would not listen to them, and said, ' I am now old, if he does not learn trading under my own eyes, I will carry the regret to my grave ; he is the son of a man, and if he does not learn now and then, when will he learn ? '

" Having said this he took me with him, in spite of their entreaties and supplications and we set out. The journey was performed in comfort and safety. When we arrived in Hindustan, we disposed some of our merchandise there. Having purchased some of the curiosities of that country we proceeded to Zurbad. The journey, too, was performed in safety. There also we bought and sold some goods, and embarked on board a vessel, in order that we might reach our country the sooner. One day, about a month after, a storm, attended by a fearful hurricane, arose, and it began to rain heavily ; the whole earth and sky grew dark as a mass of dense smoke, and the rudder broke ; the pilot and the captain in their agony began to beat their heads ; for ten days the winds and waves carried us wherever they pleased ; on the eleventh the ship dashed against a rock, and went to pieces ; I had not the remotest idea what became of my father, our servants and our goods.

" I found myself on a plank, which floated, for three days and nights, at the mercy of the waves. On the fourth day, it touched the shore. I had just life enough remaining to get off the plank, and, by dint of crawling on my knees, to reach the dry land. I perceived some fields at a distance, many people were assembled there, all black, and as naked as they were born from their mother's womb. I went up to them, they said something to me, but I did not understand their language at all. It was a grain field, the men, having kindled a large fire, were roasting the ears of gram and eating them ; and several houses came in sight near the spot. Perhaps this was their staple food, and it seemed these houses were their dwellings ; they made signs to me also that I should eat. I likewise plucked up some of the gram, parched

* Northern part of China.

it and began to toss it into my mouth ; and having drunk a little water, I went to sleep in a corner of the field.

" After some time, when I awoke, a man from among the naked blacks, came to me, and he began to show me by signs the road. I plucked some grain and went along the road he pointed out. An immense level plain, resembling in its vastness the plain of the Day of Resurrection,* lay streched before me. I moved on, feeding on the grain as I went ; after four days a fort appeared in sight ; when I approached it, I perceived it was very high, built entirely of stone, and having each side some four miles in length. As regards its gate, it was carved out of a single block of stone, and had a prodigious lock attached to it ; but it seemed to me totally destitute of human life. Advancing from there, I saw a small hill, the earth of which was black as antimony ; I passed over this eminence and a large city burst upon the view ; it was surrounded with a rampart, and a stream of great width flowed on one side of it. Proceeding on I reached a gate, and invoking God, I entered it. I saw a man, attired in European fashion, seated on a chair ; the moment he perceived I was a traveller from some foreign country, and heard me invoke God, he asked me to advance. I stepped up to him and saluted him respectfully ; he returned my salutation graciously, and having instantly placed on the table some bread and butter and a roasted fowl and wine, said, ' Eat thy fill ! ' I ate a little and drank some of the wine and fell into a deep slumber. When the night set in, I awoke and washed my hands and face ; he again gave me something in the shape of refreshments, and said ' Son, tell me thy story.' I told him all that had befallen me. He then said, ' Why hast thou come here ? ' I was very much put out by the question and replied, ' Perhaps thou art crazy ; after enduring innumerable hardships for a long time, I have at last seen the appearance of habitation, God has conducted me so far, and thou askest me why I am come here.' He replied, ' Do thou take some rest now, to morrow I will tell thee what I have to say.'

" When the morning arrived, he said to me, ' There are in this apartment a spade, a sieve, and a leather bag, bring them out.' I said within myself, ' God knows what hard work he will require me to do in return for the food he gave me to eat ? ' Having no other alternative I took

* According to the Muhammadans all the dead will come to life on the day of judgment, and will assemble on an immense plain to hear their sentences from God's mouth.

up the three implements and brought them out. He then addressed me as follows: 'Go to the black hill thou sawest, when coming to this city and dig a hole to the depth of a yard ; whatever you find therein pass through this sieve ; whatever can not pass put it into the leather bag and bring it to me.' I took up the implements and went there, and having dug a hole as deep as I had been ordered to, I sifted the contents through the sieve, and put what would not pass through the sieve into the bag as directed ; I then perceived they were all precious stones and of various colours, and my eyes were dazzled with their extraordinary lustre and brilliancy. Having in this way filled the bag up to the mouth, I carried it to that person ; on seeing it he said, 'Whatever there is in the bag, take it for thyself, and depart from this place, for it will do thee no good to stop in this city.' I replied, 'Your honour has, in your own opinion, done me a great favour by bestowing these pebbles and stones on me ; but of what service are they to me ? I cannot eat them to fill my belly with them when I am hungry ; and if you were to give me more of them, they would be absolutely useless to me.' On hearing this, that man smiled, and said, 'I pity thee, since thou art like me an inhabitant of the country of Persia ; it is because thou art my fellow-countryman that I counsel thee not to stay here, otherwise thou art free to do and free to choose. If thou art resolved, at all risks, to enter the city, then take this ring from me and go ; when thou arrivest at the *chaunk* of the market-place, thou wilt find sitting there a man with a white beard ; his face and general appearance bear a striking resemblance to those of mine ; he is my brother and older than myself, hand over the ring to him, he will then take care of thee ; proceed strictly in accordance with his advice and instructions, otherwise thy life will be forfeited for nothing ; my authority extends only thus far, I must not enter the city.' I took the ring from him and having saluted him, bade him adieu. I entered the city, and perceived that it was something fine and elegant, the streets and market-places wore a neat and pretty look, and the men and women, without concealment or reserve, were buying and selling among themselves, and were decently attired. I walked on, enjoying the sights that lay in my way. When I reached the centre of the market-place, I saw such a concourse of people there that if you throw a brass plate, it would skim clear over the heads of the people. The rush was so great, that it was difficult for a person to make his way through it. When the crowd became somewhat thinner, I, by dint of pushing and jostling, advanced forward. I saw at last the person I was in quest of

sitting on a chair, and a mace studded with precious stones lay before him. I went up to him, saluted him respectfully, and gave him the ring; he darted at me a look of anger, and said, 'Why hast thou come here and involved thyself in danger? Did not my foolish brother dissuade thee from entering the city ?'

"I answered, he did dissuade me, but I would not listen to him. I then gave a detailed account of my adventures from beginning to end. That person rose, and taking me with him, bent his steps homeward. His house looked grand and magnificent like a king's palace and he had many servants and attendants. When he had gone into his private apartment, and taken his seat, he said to me in a kindly tone, 'O son! what folly hast thou committed that thou hast purposely and deliberately rushed into the jaws of death? What unfortunate wretch ever comes to this enchanted city?' I replied, 'I have already given you my history; it is indeed my fate that has conducted me to this place, but do me the favour to enlighten me on the manners and customs of this place so that I may be in a position to understand why you and your brother dissuaded me from entering the city.' The good man answered, 'The king and all the nobles of this city are under the wrath of Heaven. Strange are their customs and religion; in an idol-temple here there is an idol from whose belly the devil tells the name, caste and creed of every individual; hence, whatever poor traveller happens to come here, the king is informed of it; he takes him to the temple, and makes him prostrate himself before the idol. If he kneels before the image of his own accord, well and good; otherwise he causes the unfortunate wretch to be plunged into the river; if he attempts to escape from the river, his private parts develop such immense proportions that he has to drag them on the ground, and in consequence of their weight he cannot move at all. Such is the enchantment which prevails in this city. Thy youth excites my compassion, and for thy sake, I am going to put in practice a plan which I have formed, so that thou mayest be able to live at least a few days, and the calamity, that must overtake thee at last, be temporarily averted.' I asked, 'What sort of scheme is it? let me know it, too?' He answered, 'I intend to get thee married and obtain for thee the *Wazir's* daughter in marriage.' I said, 'How can the *Wazir* bestow his daughter's hand in marriage upon a poor and destitute fellow like myself? Will it be on condition of my accepting his religion? This is what I can never do.' He replied, 'The custom of this city is that whoever prostrates himself be-

fore the idol, if he be a beggar and ask the king's daughter, the king must bestow her upon him, and not grieve him on any account. Moreover, I have some influence with the king, and he has a considerable regard for me; for which reason all the principal officers and nobles of this State treat me with respect. In the course of the week, they go twice to the pagoda to perform their devotions, tomorrow is one of these days on which they assemble there and I will take thee with me.'

" Having uttered these words, he gave me something to eat and drink, and sent me to bed. When the day broke, he took me along with him to the pagoda; when we arrived there we saw that people were moving to and fro, and performing their worship.

" In front of the idol, and near the priest, the king and the nobles, with their heads bare, were seated in respectful postures; unmarried girls, and handsome boys, whose beauty and loveliness rivalled those of *Hur* and *Ghilman*, were standing on all four sides, drawn up in lines. The good old man spoke to me, and said, ' Now act according to my direction' I promised implicit obedience, saying, ' I shall do whatever you command me to.' He said, ' First kiss the king's hands and feet, and then lay hold of the hem of the *Wazir's* garment.' I did so. The king inquired, ' Who is this, and what does he want ? '

" My patron replied, ' This youth is a relation of mine; he has come from a distance, impelled by a desire to kiss Your Majesty's feet, and in the hope that the *Wazir* will exalt him by taking him into his family, if the order of the great idol and Your Majesty's approbation be to that effect.' The king said, ' if he will embrace the religion of our sect, and our customs, it will bring him happiness and prosperity' Immediately the drums in the drum-house began to beat; and I was invested with a costly robe of honour. After this a black cord round my neck dragged me before the idol, and, having made me prostrate myself before it, they lifted me up.

" A voice issued from the image, ' O young merchant, thou hast done well to enter into my service; and henceforward have confidence in my mercy and goodness.' On hearing these words, all people knelt before the image, and began to roll on the ground, and exclaimed, ' Glory unto thee; why should it not be so? Thou art a mighty

* *Hur* are celestial females and *Ghilman* heavenly youths who will wait upon all true believers in paradise.

lord.' When the evening set in, the King and the *Wazir* got up their horses and proceeding to the *Wazir's* house entered his seraglio, and, having performed the rites and ceremonies according to their own fashion, delivered over to me the minister's daughter; they gave me moreover a large dowry and valuable presents with her, and expressed themselves extremely beholden to me, saying, 'According to the orders of the great idol, we have given her to thee.' They lodged us both in one and the same house; when I saw that lovely maiden, I perceived that her beauty vied with that of a fairy; she was perfect from head to foot, and all the excellences and beauties, which we hear are characteristic of the *Padmāni* class of females, were summed up in her. I shared her bed, and felt happy in being the husband of such a charming girl. In the morning, after I had bathed, I presented myself before the King. That monarch bestowed on me a marriage dress of honour, and desired me to attend his levee without fail; at last after some days his majesty enrolled me as one of his privy counsellors.

"The King was delighted with my company, and constantly gave me presents and dresses of honour, although I was rich in worldly wealth, for my wife possessed so much money and effects and jewels that they exceeded all bounds. Two years passed in indescribable comfort and felicity. It happened that the *Wazir's* daughter, my wife, conceived; when the seventh and eighth month had gone by, and she entered her full time, the pains of labour came on; the nurse and midwife were summoned and a dead child was brought forth; its poison also infected the mother, who also expired. I became mad with grief and cried out, 'What a dreadful calamity has befallen me.' Seated at the head of her bed, I was weeping; all of a sudden, the voice of lamentations resounded through the whole seraglio, and the females began to flock around me from all sides. Each as she came in struck one or two blows on my head with her hands, and, standing in front of me, commenced weeping. So many women were gathered around me, that I was entirely hidden among them, and very near to being suffocated.

"In the meanwhile, some one from behind pulled my collar and dragged me along; I looked up and perceived it was the same Persian who had married me to the Minister's daughter. He exclaimed, 'O fool what art thou crying for?' 'O cruel one!' replied I, 'What sort of question is this thou askest? I have been robbed of my empire, and my domestic happiness has been utterly wrecked, and thou

ignorantly askest why I weep ?' He said with a smile, 'Now weep over thy own death. I told thee in the very beginning, that perhaps thy evil destiny had conducted thee hither to die ; my words have proved only too true ; thou canst now escape except through death.' At last the people seized me, and carried me to the pagoda. I saw that the King, the nobles, and thirty-six tribes of his subjects were gathered there. The effects and valuables of my wife were all collected there ; whatever articles one's heart wished, he took, and paid down its price in ready money.

" In short, all her property was converted into hard cash ; with this cash, precious stones were bought, and locked up in a tiny box ; they then filled a chest with bread, sweatmeats, roast meat, dried and fresh fruit and other eatables, and they put the dead body of my deceased wife into another chest, and slung both the chests across a camel's back, and having mounted me on the camel, they placed the box containing the precious stones in my lap. All the Brahmans preceded me chanting hymns, and blowing their conches, and a large concourse of pupils came in my rear to wish me joy. In this manner, I was led out of the city, through the identical gate by which I came on the first day. The moment the eyes of the Superintendent of the Gate, whom I had first met on the day of my arrival, fell upon me, he burst into a flood of tears, and said, ' O unfortunate wretch ! thy fate is sealed. Thou wouldest not listen to me, but entered the city in spite of my warning, and now you have forfeited your life for nothing. I am in no way to blame. I did dissuade thee.' He said all this, but I was so completely bewildered and confounded, that my tongue would not help me to give him an answer ; nor were my senses in their right place, to foresee the fate that was in store for me.

" They carried me at last to the very same fort the gate of which I had observed locked when I came to see it for the first time. The lock was opened by the united effort of many people, and they conveyed the corpse and the chest of food inside the building. The priest stepped up to me and began to console me, remarking, ' Man is born one day and one day he must die : such is the law of transmigration working in the world ; now these—thy wife, thy son, thy wealth, and forty days' food—are placed here ; take them and stay here until the great idol becomes mercifully disposed toward thee ' In my anger, I wished to curse the idol, the inhabitants of the place and their manners and customs, and to fist and slap the priest to my heart's content ; but that same man of Persia, speaking to me in his own tongue,

warned me against any such outburst of temper, saying, ‘Take care, don’t utter a word ; if thou sayest anything whatever, they will immediately consign thee alive to the flames ; whatever was in thy destiny, that has come to pass ; now place thy reliance on the mercy of God ; perhaps He will bring thee out alive from this dungeon.’

“ In short, all of them, having left me alone, went out of the fort, and locked the gate. At that moment I wept bitterly at my lonely and helpless condition, and began to kick the corpse of the woman, saying, ‘ O cursed deceased ! if thou wast to perish in delivery, why didst thou marry and conceive ? ’ After beating and striking her as much as I could, I sat down in silence. In the meantime, the day had advanced, and the sun became exceedingly hot ; my brains began to boil, and I was very near expiring through the dreadful stench. In whatever direction I cast my eyes, I saw nothing but the bones of the dead, and boxes filled with precious stones innumerable. I then collected some old chests, and placed them over one another in order that by means of these I might be protected from the heat of the sun in the day, and from the dew at night. I began to look about for water, and on one side I perceived something resembling a cascade, which was cut out of stone in the fort wall, and had a mouth like a water pot. In short I supported my life for many days on the food they had left with me, and the water I had discovered.

“ At last, the provisions were finished, and I became alarmed and complained to God. He is so merciful and generous that the gate of the fort opened, and another dead body was brought in, a decrepit old man accompanied it. After they had left him and departed, it came into my mind that I would put the old man to death and take his chest. I approached him, he was a poor wretch, extremely afflicted and distressed ; with his head reclining on his knee. I stole behind him and dealt such a blow on the head that his skull was fractured and his brains came out, and he instantly surrendered his soul to God. I got possession of his supply of provisions, and began to subsist upon it. For a long time it was my custom that whenever any person was brought in with the dead I used to murder the former, and, seizing his stock of food, I lived in ease and plenty.”

“ After some time a young girl once came with a bier ; she was remarkably beautiful, and I had not the hard heart to murder her, as I had hitherto been doing. She saw me, and fainted away through fear. I took her supply of provisions and conveyed it to where I lived, but

I did not eat it alone ; when I felt hungry, I would carry her some victuals ; and we ate together. When the girl saw that I did not molest her, her fear gradually wore off, and she became more familiar, and used to pay me visits at my shed. One day I asked her her story, and who she was, she answered, ‘ I am the daughter of the King’s Prime Minister’s daughter, and had been betrothed to my uncle’s son. On the marriage night he was attacked with colic, and was in such agonies from the excruciating pain, that he died in an instant ; they brought me here with his dead body, and left me to my fate.’ She then desired to hear my story ; I gave her a detailed account of my adventures, and in conclusion added, ‘ God hath sent thee here for me.’ She smiled and remained silent.”

“ In this way mutual affection grew stronger between us in a short time ; I instructed her in the tenets of the Muhammadan faith, taught her to repeat the creed and made her my wife. We began to live as man and wife, she conceived, and finally was delivered of a son. Nearly three years rolled away in this manner. When our child was weaned, I said to my wife, ‘ How long shall we remain here, and how shall we get out of this dreadful place ?’ She answered. ‘ If God delivers us from this place, we may once more be free ; otherwise we shall some day find our grave here.’ I wept bitterly at her reply, and at our imprisonment ; and while bewailing our fate I fell asleep. I saw a person in my dream, who said to me, ‘ There is an outlet through thy drain, effect the escape through it.’ ”

“ I started up through joy, and said to my wife ‘ Collect and bring to me all the old nails and bolts belonging to the rotten chests, so that I may, with their help, enlarge the mouth of the drain.’ To be brief, I used to apply a large nail to the mouth of the drain and hammer it with a stone until I became quite exhausted with effort ; in this way, after a year’s hard toil, I widened the outlet so much that a man could easily get through it.

“ After that, having picked out the very finest of the precious stones, and put them into the sleeves of the garments of the dead, we took them with us, and got out through the hole I had made. I returned my grateful thanks to Heaven for the mercy he had shown us, and placing the boy on my shoulders, we set out.

“ It is a month since we quitted the high road through fear, and have travelled along the country by paths through woods and over mountains ; when hunger overpowered us we ate grass and leaves. I have not strength left to say a word more ; this is my story which I have just re-

lated to you. O mighty King, I took compassion on him and having caused him to be thoroughly bathed and washed, I had him decently and elegantly dressed, and made him my deputy. In my own house, I had several children by the Princess, but they all died, one after another, while they were yet infants. One son reached his fifth year and then died; through grief for him the Princess died also. I was in the utmost distress, and that country became disagreeable to me. After her loss, my health became a prey to sadness and dejection, and I resolved upon returning to Persia.

~ "I disclosed my intentions to the King and got the young man whose story I have just related appointed as Governor of the Port in my stead. In the meantime the King died also. I took my faithful dog, my property, all my wealth and precious stones with me and came to Neshapur, in order that nobody might become acquainted with the story of my brothers. I have come to be designated and known as the dog-worshipping Khwaja, and in consequence of this evil fame, I pay double the tax really due into the Treasury of the King of Persia.

" It so happened that this youthful merchant went to *Neshapur*, and it is owing to him that I have had the good fortune of kissing Your Majesty's feet.' I asked the *Khwaja*, ' What ! is not he your own son ?' He replied, ' Great King, he is not my son, he is one of Your Majesty's subjects, but he is now all in all to me—even my heir, or whatever Your Majesty may please to call him.' On hearing this, I asked the young merchant, ' Of what merchant are you the son, and where do your parents live ?' The young man kissed the ground, and, imploring pardon for his life, answered, ' This slave is the daughter of Your Majesty's *Wazir*; my sire fell under the royal wrath in consequence of his having asserted that this old merchant before you had such valuable rubies and Your Majesty's orders were, that if within one year my father's words should not be proved to be true, he should be executed. On hearing the King's orders, I put on this disguise, and repaired to *Neshapur*; God has conducted the *Khwaja*, together with the dog and rubies, to your royal presence ; I am now in hopes that my old sire may be set at liberty.'

" On hearing these facts from the *Wazir's* daughter, the *Khwaja* heaved a deep sigh, and fell down senseless. When rose-water was sprinkled over his face, he came back to his senses, and exclaimed, ' Alas, evil destiny ! that I should have come all these weary miles, encountering such hardships and troubles, in the hope that, having

adopted the young merchant as my son, I should transfer to him, by a deed of gift, the possession of all my riches and property, that my name may not become extinct, and all may call him *Khwajazad* (Governor's son); but all my hopes have proved delusive and vain, and the affair has turned out contrary to what I expected. Being a woman, he (she) encompassed my ruin. I became the victim of a woman's wiles and now the saying applies to me, ' Thou remainedest neither at home, nor didst thou go on a pilgrimage; yet thy head has been shaved and thou art laughed at by all.' To be brief, I took pity on his agitation, and tears and lamentations, and having called him near me and whispered into his ears the welcome intelligence that he should get her, I said ' Don't be afflicted; I will marry thee to her; if it pleases God, thou shalt have children from her, and the same shall be thy survivors.' On hearing these glad tidings, he was entirely comforted. After this, I gave the order to the attendants, ' Take the *Wazir's* daughter to the seraglio, and, having brought out the minister from the prison, let him be thoroughly washed in the bath, dressed in a robe of honour (showing his restoration to favour) and brought quickly before me.' When the *Wazir* arrived, I advanced to the end of the *farash** to receive him; and considering him to be my superior in point of years and wisdom, I embraced him, and conferred on him a new ink-horn † of *Wazirship*.

' On the *Khwaja* also I bestowed titles and lands and, choosing an auspicious hour, I united him in marriage with the *Wazir's* daughter. In a few years, he had, by his new wife, two sons and a daughter; of the sons, the eldest is the Prince of Merchants, and the youngest the head manager of my house. O *Darweshes*, I have related to you the past events of my life for the reason that last night I heard the adventures of two of you; now you two who have yet to relate their stories, imagine to yourselves that I am still where I found you seated last night and look upon me as your servant, and my house your *takiya*,‡ relate your histories without the slightest fear, and stay some days with me.

When the *Darweshes* saw that the King was so kind to them they said, ' Well ! when Your Majesty is so friendly and condescending to us, we, too, will also relate our histories; be pleased to listen to them.'

* A rare mark of respect, which the Oriental sovereigns seldom pay even to their equals.

†The *kalmdan*.

‡The abode of a *fakir*.

ADVENTURES OF THE THIRD DARWESH.

- The third *Darwesh*, squatted down at his ease,* began to relate the events of his travels as follows:—

O Friends, the story of this mendicant hear;
 What I have to say, hear the story of what has happened to me;
 How the King of Love hath dealt by me,
 I am going to describe it in detail; O hear.

"This humble person is the Prince of Persia; my father was the ruler of that country, and had no children except myself. In the period of my youth, I used to play with my companions at *chaupar*,† cards, chess and backgammon, or mounting my horse, I used to devote my time to enjoying the pleasures of hunting. It happened one day, that I ordered my hunting party, and in company with all my friends and acquaintances, I sallied forth in the direction of the plains. Letting loose the hawks of various kinds after ducks and partridges, we followed them to a considerable distance. A lovely landscape, unique in its beauty, burst upon the view; for miles around, as far as the eye could reach, the ground appeared clothed in verdure, extensively interspersed with flowers which imparted a ruddy hue to the whole scene. At the sight of this charming scenery we dropped the bridles of our horses, and proceeded at a gentle pace admiring the prospect as we moved along. All of a sudden, we saw a black deer on the plain, having a brocade covering on, a jewelled string round its neck, and wearing a collar, studded with precious stones, with bells of solid gold attached to it; fearless it gazed, moving in conscious security over the plain, where human foot never trod, and where a bird never flapped a wing. Hearing the sound of our horses' hoofs it took alarm, lifted upon its head, looked at us, and moved swiftly away. When my eyes lighted on it, I became so excited that I exclaimed to my companions, 'Stay where you are, I will catch it alive; take care you do not move a step, and do not follow me.' The steed, on which I was mounted, was so fleet, that I had often galloped it after stags, and, making them forget their bounds, had seized them one after another with my hands. I spurred him after it; on seeing me it began to bound, and fled with the swiftness of the wind. My horse also was incomparable in his fleetness, but he could not come up to the very dust it raised. The horse was bathed in perspiration, and my tongue, too, began to crack

* *Kot bandh kar baithna*. Squatting down, with the two hands clasped together round the legs a little below the knees.

† Ancient Indian game, resembling backgammom, and played by four people, each having four men or pieces.

with thirst ; but I had no other alternative. The evening was fast coming on and I knew not how far I had come, or where I was. Seeing no other way to get hold of the animal I had recourse to a trick, and having taken out an arrow from the quiver, I adjusted my bow, drew the arrow to its fullest length, and invoking the name of God, I discharged it. The arrow entered the animal's leg, which, limping, fled towards the foot of the mountain

"I alighted from my horse, and followed it close on foot, it betook itself to the mountain ; and I dashed after it in hot pursuit. After many ascents and descents a dome appeared. When I drew near it, I saw a small garden and a fountain ; but the deer vanished from my sight. I was quite exhausted with the chase, and commenced washing my hands and face in the fountain.

"Suddenly, the noise of some one weeping broke in upon my ears ; it seemed to come from inside the tower, as if somebody was saying, 'O my child, may the arrow of grief penetrate the heart of him, who has hit thee with this arrow ; may he derive no fruit from his youth and may God make him as afflicted as I am.' Hearing this, I went inside. I saw a venerable old man, with a white beard, and decently attired, seated on a cushion, and the deer lying before him ; he was pulling out the arrow from its thigh, and showering curses on the shooter. I saluted him, and, with folded hands, said, 'Holy sir, I have committed this fault through ignorance ; I was not aware it was your deer ; for God's sake look over my fault.' He answered, ' You have hurt a dumb animal ; if you have unknowingly committed this act, God will forgive you.' I seated myself near him, and helped him in drawing out the arrow ; with great difficulty we pulled out the shaft, and having applied some balsam to the wound, we let the deer go. We then washed our hands, and the old man gave me some food to eat, which was then ready ; after I had appeased my hunger and quenched my thirst, I stretched myself out on a couch, and went to sleep.

"Having had a full meal, and being extremely fatigued, I dropped into a profound slumber. In that sleep, the noise of weeping and lamentations reached my ears ; rubbing my eyes, I looked around, and perceived that neither the old man nor any one else was present in the house. I was alone on the bed, and the room was destitute of all human life. I was alarmed, and began to look in all directions ; I espied a screen in a corner which was down ; approaching it, I lifted it up, and saw that a throne was placed there, on which was seated a maiden, superb

qvely, and about fourteen years old ; her face was gloriou like the moon, and her curls on both sides of her head hung loose ; she had a smiling countenance, was dressed in the European fashion, and her look and attitude were characterised by rare grace and dignity ; there she sat looking forward. The venerable old man lay prostrate before her, his head resting on her feet ; he was weeping bitterly, and appeared unconscious of himself. Seeing the state which the old man was in, and remarking the beauty and perfections of the lady, I was completely overpowered, and fell down like one struck dead. The old man, seeing my condition, fetched a bottle of rose-water and commenced, sprinkling the fluid over my face. When I came to my senses, I got up, and, stepping up to the lovely lady saluted her ; she did not at all return my salute nor did she utter one single word in acknowledgment. I said 'O rose-bodied one ! in what religion is it justifiable to be so haughty and proud, and not to return a salute ?—

VERSE—

Although to speak little is graceful, yet not to such an extent.

If the lover be on the point of death, even then she would not open her lips.

' For the sake of Him, who hath created thee, vouchsafe to me an answer ; I came here accidentally, and it is necessary and proper we should please our guests. I talked much to her, but it was of no avail , she heard and sat dumb and mute like a statue. I then went forward, and laid my hand on her feet ; when I touched them I perceived they were quite hard ; at last I knew that they had carved this beautiful statue out of a stone, and that *Azoor** had shaped the image. I then said to the idol-worshipping old man, I struck an arrow in thy deer's leg, but thou hast, with the dart of love, pierced my heart through and through ; thy curse has taken effect ; now give me a full explanation of all these circumstances ; why hast thou made this enchanting object, and why, avoiding society, dost thou prefer living in woods and mountains ? We know all that has befallen thee.'

"When I pressed him greatly, he said, 'This affair indeed has been the cause of my ruin ; wouldest thou also commit disgrace and destruction by hearing it ?' ' Hold,' cried I, ' thou hast already made too many evasions ; speak to the purpose or else, I will put thee to death.' Seeing me so importunate and determined, he said, 'May the Almighty God preserve every one from the consuming flame

* *Azoor*, father of Abraham, was, according to the *Musalmans*, a *statuary* and *idol-worshinner*.

of love. What calamities and disasters has not his love been fruitful of ? For love, the woman immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her husband and sacrifices her life,* and all know the story of *Farhad* and *Majnoon*; what good will it do thee to hear my story ? Thou wilt leave thy home, wealth and country, and wander for nothing.' I replied, 'Stop speaking in that fashion, and keep thy friendship to thyself ; look upon me as thy enemy, and if thou hast any regard for thy life, relate to me thy story without reserve ' Seeing no other alternative, his eyes filled with tears, and he began to say, "The following is the story of this miserable wretch : The name of this slave is Núman, the Traveller. I was a considerable merchant; during these years I have visited all parts of the world in connection with my mercantile concerns, and I have had access to the presence of all sovereigns.

"Once the idea came into my mind that I had travelled in all the various countries in the four quarters of the globe, but had never gone to the *Island of the Franks*,† nor seen its King, inhabitants and troops, nor inquired into its manners and customs: so I thought I ought to pay a visit to it for once I consulted my friends and acquaintances on the subject, and made up my mind to undertake the voyage I took with me curiosities and rarities of different places, such as were fit to be offered as presents in that country, and having assembled a large number of merchants, we embarked on board a vessel and set sail. The wind being favourable, we reached the island in a few months, and entered its capital city. I saw it was a grand town, which no city could equal in beauty. The streets and market-places were all paved and sprinkled with water and such was the cleanliness that not even a bit of straw could be seen anywhere, to speak of dirt is out of the question. There were buildings of every description, and at night the streets were lit up, every step with a double row of lamps ; without the city there were beautiful gardens, abounding in flowers and shrubs and fruits, such as could not be met with anywhere else except Paradise. To be brief, whatever I may say in praise of this magnificent town, would only represent the actual truth.

"The arrival of our merchants had become the subject of general talk. A confidential eunuch, mounted on horseback and escorted by many servants, came to the caravan and asked the merchants the name of their chief. They all pointed to me. The eunuch came to my apartment ; I got

* Alluding to the Hindu custom of *Suttee*, abolished by Lord William Bentinck in 1829 and latterly in the Native States by Lord Hardinge in 1848 A.D.

† Possibly refers to the British Islands.

up to give him a respectful reception, and we saluted each other; I seated him on the *masnad* and offered him the pillow. After this I requested him to inform me as to what had given me the honour of his visit; he answered, 'The Princess has heard that some merchants have arrived and have brought with them a great deal of merchandise, for which reason she has ordered me to conduct them into her presence; so come and take along with you whatever articles of merchahdise may be suitable for the royal courts, and gain the happiness of kissing her threshold.'

"I replied, 'To-day, I feel extremely tired, to-morrow, indeed, I shall attend with my life and property; whatever is in the possession of humble me, the same I will lay as an offering at the feet of the Princess, and whatever she approves of, shall become her Royal Highness's property.' Having given him this promise, I treated him to *atar* and betel, and dismissed him. I called all the merchants near me, and, having collected together the rarities which each had, along with those which were lying in my own apartments, I presented myself in the morning at the royal palace. The relief guards sent word that I had arrived; the order came that I should be conducted to the royal presence; the same eunuch came, and, placing my hand in his, he led me along, while we enjoyed a friendly chat. Passing through the apartments of the female attendants of the Princess he took me into a magnificent room. O friend, you will not believe me, but the scene, which came before my eyes, was so beautiful that you might say that fairies had been let loose there with their wings clipped. In whatever direction I cast my eyes, even there my gaze became transfixed, and my feet were being torn away from under me. I supported myself with the greatest difficulty, and reached the royal presence. The instant I beheld the Princess, a fainting fit came upon me, and my hands and feet were struck with paralysis.

"Somehow or other I managed to make salutation. Lovely females were drawn up in rows to the right and left, with their arms folded across. Whatever jewels, fine wearing stuffs, and other rich curiosities I had taken with me, I laid before the Princess; from these she selected some (for they were all worthly of choice) and, being highly pleased with their quality, she made them over to her steward and said, 'The price of these shall be paid to-morrow, according to the list.' I made my obeisance and was inwardly pleased with the thought that under this pretext I should have to come again the next day

When I took my leave and withdrew, I was talking like a maniac ; I said one thing and intended another. In this state, I came to the inn, but my senses were confused and bewildered ; all my friends began to ask what was the matter with me ; I answered that, in consequence of going and coming back so far, the heat had affected my brain.

" In short, I passed that night in extreme agitation and restlessness. In the morning, I went and again presented myself at the palace, and entered the seraglio along with the confidential eunuch. I saw the scene I had witnessed the day before. The Princess received me graciously, and sent every one present away, each to his own business.

" After they had all departed, she adjourned to a private apartment, and summoned me there. When I entered, she ordered me to sit down, which I accordingly did. After making here my obeisance she then said to me, ' As you have come here and brought these articles of merchandise with you, how much profit do you expect on them ? ' I answered, ' I had an intense desire to kiss Your Highness's feet, which desire God has granted, and now I have realized the fondest wishes of my heart, and acquired the happiness of both worlds. Whatever prices are marked in the list, half is the original cost, and half profit.' She said, ' No, whatever price is entered in the list, shall be paid ; moreover, you shall be given something as a reward, provided you do me a service, which I shall presently require of you.'

" I replied, ' If this slave's life and property can be of the slightest use to Your Highness, I shall esteem it as a piece of extraordinary good fortune to devote them to your service, and shall do your bidding with the greatest pleasure in the world.' On hearing this, she called for her writing bag of pearls, wrapped the purse in a handkerchief of the finest muslin, and made it over to me ; she, at the same time, took off a ring from her finger and gave it to me so that it might serve as my *credentials* ; after this she said to me, ' On the other side, there is a large garden, it is called Dilkusha (Heart's Delight) ; do you go there. A person named *Kaikhusro* is the superintendent of the garden, give him the ring and bless him for me, and ask a reply to this letter, but come back with all possible speed, as if you ate your dinner there, and drank your water here ; you will see what a reward I shall bestow upon you for this task.' I took my leave, and proceeded on my errand, enquiring the way. When I had gone some four miles I came in sight of the garden. As I approached it

an armed man seized me, and led me into the garden gate I saw there a young man, with the looks and mien of a lion ; he was seated on a golden chair with great dignity and state, clad in a coat of mail, made by the famous *Daud** himself, with breast-plates of varnished steel, which shone like so many mirrors, and having a steel helmet on his head. Five hundred active young men each having a shield and sword in his hands, and armed with bows and arrows, stood drawn up in lines ready to carry out his orders.

"I saluted him, and he called me to him ; I gave him the ring, I showed him the handkerchief and mentioned also the fact of my being the bearer of a note from the Princess. The moment he heard this he bit his finger with his teeth, and slapping his head he said, 'Perhaps thy evil destiny conducted thee hither. Well, enter the garden, an iron cage is suspended from a cypress tree and in that cage there is a young man imprisoned, deliver him the note, get his answer, and come back as quick as possible.' immediately went into the garden. Who can describe its beauty ; I seemed as if I had entered Paradise alive. Each separate parterre bloomed with flowers of manifold colours ; the fountains were playing and the birds pouring forth their sweet melodies.

"I went straight on, and beheld the cage hanging on a tree in which I saw a very handsome young man. With respect I bent my head and saluted him and handed over the sealed bag to him through the bars. The young man opened the letter, and devoured its contents, and enquired of me about the Princess with great tenderness and affection. We had hardly done speaking, when an army of officers appeared, and attacked me on all sides, and began to strike me forthwith with their swords and spears ; what could one single unarmed man do against such fearful odds ? In a moment they covered me with wounds and, becoming utterly senseless and unconscious, I fell to the ground. When I came to my senses, I found myself stretched out on a bedstead, which two soldiers were bearing along on their shoulders ; they were talking to each other. One said, 'Let us throw the corpse of this dead man on the plain ; the dogs and crows will soon eat it up.' The other answered, 'If the King should make an enquiry, and learn this circumstance, he will have us entombed alive, and will order our children to be crushed to death in an oilman's press. What ! are we sick of life that we shall act so imprudently ?' On hearing this I said to the two villains—*Gog* and *Magog*, 'For Heaven's

sake have pity on me, I have still a spark of life left in me ; when I am dead, you may dispose of me as you like ; the dead is, in every way, at the mercy of the living ;^{*} but tell me what has befallen me ; why did they wound me and who are you ? pray, explain all these things to me. At this appeal of mine, they were moved with pity and replied. The young man, who is imprisoned in the cage, is the King's nephew ; and his father was formerly on the throne. When on his death-bed, he gave the following instructions to his brother : ' My son, who is heir to the empire, is as yet a mere boy, and quite inexperienced ; Do you continue to manage the affairs of the kingdom with zeal and prudence ; when he is of age, unite your daughter with him in marriage, and place him in an undisputed possession of the empire and treasury.'

"After saying this, His Majesty expired, and the cares and responsibilities of government devolved on the younger brother ; he did not act up to the late monarch's will ; on the contrary, he gave it out that his nephew was mad and unsound in mind, and he put him into a cage, and placed strong guards on all sides of the garden, so that not even a bird can there flap its wings , and many a time he had administered to the Prince the deadly poison called *halahal* ; but his destiny is stronger, and he had survived its effects. Now the Princess and the Prince are the lover and mistress ; she is restless and distracted at home, while he keeps dashing his head against prison bars in the thoughts of his beloved ; she sent him a love note by your hands ; the spies instantly carried the news of this circumstance to the King ; a body of negroes was ordered, and they reduced thee to this plight The King has consulted with his minister on the means of getting rid of the Prince for good, and that monster of ingratitude has prevailed upon the Princess to kill her innocent lover with her own hands in the king's presence.'

"I said, 'Let us go that I may witness this scene, even, though I am standing on the verge of the grave. They at last acceded to my request, and two soldiers and myself, though covered with wounds, went to the spot where the tragic scene was to take place, and stood in silence in an isolated corner. We saw the king seated on his throne ; the Princess had in her hand a naked sword ; the Prince was brought out of the cage, and made to stand before the King ; the Princess becoming an executioner, advanced, with the naked sword, to dispatch her lover. When she

* A Persian proverb.

† Literally, he keeps fluttering in the cage.

came near the Prince, she flung away the blade and clasped him to her bosom. Then the lover said to her, 'I am willing to die thus; here I pine for thee, and there I shall long for thee.'*

"The Princess said 'I have come under this pretext to have a look at thee.' The King, on beholding this scene became transported with rage, and reproaching the Minister said 'Hast thou brought me here to see this scene?' The Princess's confidential eunuch separated the Princess from her lover, and led her to the seraglio. The minister took up the sword and in rage, rushed upon the Prince to end with a single stroke his unhappy existence. As he lifted his arm to strike the fatal blow, an arrow, shot by an invisible hand, buried itself in his forehead, so that his head was cleft in two and he fell down dead.

'The King, seeing this mysterious occurrence, adjourned to his palace; and they put the young Prince again into the cage, and conveyed him to the garden; I too, left my place of retreat. On the road a man called me and conducted me to the presence of the Princess. Seeing me badly wounded, she summoned a surgeon and gave him strict injunctions saying, 'Cure this young man as quickly as possible, and enable him to perform the bath of recovery Your welfare depends on this; besides, in proportion you look after him and give him your time and attention, in the same proportion will you be rewarded.' In short, the surgeon, keeping in mind the injunctions of the Princess, displayed such skill and assiduity in treating me that in forty days he enabled me to take the bath of recovery and conducted me to her presence. She asked me, 'Is there nothing left to be done now?' 'No,' I replied, 'through your goodness and humanity, I am now quite recovered and well.' The Princess then bestowed upon me a valuable robe of honour and a large sum of money besides, which she had promised; nay she gave me twice as much and dismissed me.

"I took all my servants and friends with me, and set out thence homewards. When I arrived at this spot, I told all of them to go back to their native land, and I built on this hill this house and got a statue made of the Princess. I took up my abode here and, having given rewards to my servants and slaves according to their respective merits and worth, I set them free, saying to them at parting only this, 'As long as I am alive, you will have to supply me with the necessaries of life; after I am dead, you shall be your own masters.' They pro-

* That is, in this world and the next.

vide me with food and drink from gratitude, and I worship this statue with my heart free from all care; whilst I live, this will be my sole business; these are my adventures which you have just heard, O Darwishes! The moment I had finished this story I threw the beggar's shirt over my shoulders and having assumed the garb of a pilgrim, set off with extreme desire to see the country of the Franks. For a long time I travelled through forests and over mountains and came to resemble Majnoon and Farhad in appearance.

"At last my strong desire conducted me to the identical European city of which the old statue-worshipper had spoken; I began to wander about in its streets and lanes after the fashion of a maniac; the major portion of my time I used to pass in the vicinity of the seraglio. I was greatly vexed that I should not obtain the object for the acquisition of which I had endured such misery and trouble and had come from such a distance. One day, I was standing in the market-place, when all at once every one present began to run away, and the shop-keepers, having closed their shops, also took to their heels. What a dense mass of people was here but a moment before and that death-like silence came to prevail all of a sudden? I soon perceived a young man rushing forward from a side street; he was a veritable giant in appearance like Rustam, and his roar was terrific as that of a lion; he brandished a naked sword in each hand; he was clad in a coat of mail, had a brass pistol in his girdle, and was muttering and gabbling away something to himself like a lunatic; two slaves followed him, dressed in broad-cloth, and carrying on their heads a bier, with the corpse wrapped up in velvet of Kashan.

"On beholding this sight I made up my mind to accompany him: those I met dissuaded me from it, but I would not listen to them. Pushing forward, the young man proceeded towards a magnificent edifice; I also followed him. He looked back and perceiving that I was coming after him, he wished to strike me a blow, and cut me in two, I conjured him not to spare me, as already I longed to die, and I added, 'I pardon you my blood; release me somehow or other from the bondage of a miserable existence, for I am sore afflicted; I have purposely and deliberately thrown myself in your way; do not delay my execution.' Finding me resolved to die, God infused compassion in his heart, and his temper cooled down and he asked me in an extremely gentle and kind tone, 'Who art thou, and why art thou sick of life?'

"I answered, 'Be good enough to sit down a while that I may answer your questions; my story is long and tedious. I am caught in the claws of love and am, for this reason wretched and desperate.' On hearing this he untied his girdle and, having washed his head and face, he partook of some refreshments, and helped me to some also. When we had done eating he said 'Relate what has happened to thee.' I gave a detailed account of the adventures of the old man and the Princess, and the motive which had conducted me to Europe. On hearing them, he wept and said, 'How many lovers this unfortunate Princess has ruined! Well, thy cure is in my hands; it is probable that by the assistance of this sinful being thou will obtain the object of thy desires; do thou not feel anxious, but be hopeful.' He then desired the barber to shave me, and to thoroughly wash and bathe me in the bath; his slave brought me a suit of clothes, and helped me to dress myself; then the young man said, 'This bier which thou seest, is that of the late young prince, who was imprisoned in the iron cage; another minister murdered him at last by foul play; though he treacherously met his death, he is yet happy, for he was innocent; I am his foster-brother; I put the villainous minister to death with a blow of my sword, and wished to finish with the King too, but he implored mercy and swore that he had no hand in the Prince's murder; I spurned him as a rank coward and spared his life. Since then my employment has been to convey this hearse to the city, on the first Thursday of every moon, go about through the streets, and mourn for the murdered prince.'

"On hearing these circumstances from his lips, I felt somewhat comforted and said to myself, 'If he should wish it, the desires of my heart would be realized; God has been extremely merciful to me, in that he has made such a mad man favourably inclined towards me; true it is that when God is kind, all others are kind as well.' When it was evening and the sun had set, the young man took up the hearse, and instead of on one of the slaves, he put it on my head, and asking me, to follow him, said, 'I am going to the Princess, and will plead for thee to the best of my power; do not thou utter a single word, but preserve absolute silence, and listen. I answered, 'I shall proceed strictly according to your directions; God preserve you, for you take pity on my case.' The young man then bent his steps towards the royal garden and, when we entered it, I beheld a marble platform with eight sides, in an open space of the garden; it was shaded with a canopy of white brocade, with a pearl-fringe supported with poles, set with diamonds; a rich embroidered

masnad, plentifully furnished with pillows of all kinds, was placed under the canopy. He ordered the bier to be placed there, and told us to go and sit under a tree which he pointed out.

" In a short time the light of flambeaux appeared ; the Princess herself came, attended by some female servants before and behind her, sorrow and anger were visible in her looks ; she ascended the platform, and took her seat on the *masnad*. The foster-brother stood before her in a respectful attitude, with joined hands, then sat down at a proper distance on the end of the carpet. The prayer for the dead was read ; after that the foster-brother said something to the Princess ; I strained my ears and listened with attention. At last he said, ' O Princess of the world ! peace be upon you. The Prince of the country of Persia, having heard in your absence, of your loveliness and your excellent qualities, has abandoned his kingdom and putting on the habit of a pilgrim and courting ruins like Abraham Adham* has, after enduring innumerable hardships and undergoing great fatigues, arrived in this city. The pilgrim hath quitted *Balkht* for thee ; he has wandered about for many days through the city in extreme dejection and distress ; at last, having made up his mind to die, he followed me close ; I threatened to cut off his head with my sword, he stretched forth his neck, and conjured me to strike without delay, adding that he could wish nothing better than to die. In short, he is desperately in love with you. I have tried and tested him well, and have found him perfect in every respect. For this reason I have spoken about him to you ; if Your Highness would take pity on his case, and be generous to him, as he is a stranger, it would not be too much on the part of one who is God-fearing, and is so profoundly alive to the dictates of justice.'

" On hearing this speech, the Princess said, ' Where is he ? If he is really a prince, then it does not signify, let him appear before us.' The foster-brother rose and came to where I was seated, and took me with him. When I beheld the Princess, my joy exceeded all bounds, and my reason and my senses forsook me. I was dumb, and had not the courage to utter a word. A moment after, the Princess went away to her palace, and the foster-brother returned to his own dwelling. When we arrived at his house, he said, ' I have related all the circumstances you mentioned to the Princess in their detail, and have also

* A prince of Khurasan who abandoned the throne to lead the life of a recluse.

† A city in Khurasan, famous in former times for its wealth.

pleaded in thy behalf ; now do you repair there regularly every night, and enjoy the company of your beloved. I fell at his feet ; he lifted me up, and embraced me affectionately. The whole day, I kept counting the hours, and asking myself in impatience, 'When will the evening set in, that I may go there ? When the night came, I took leave of that youngman, and wended my way to the Princess's lower garden ; arrived there I took my seat on the marble platform, reclining on a pillow.

" An hour after, the Princess came slowly accompanied by a single female attendant, and sat down on the *masnad* ; it was through my extreme good fortune that I lived to see this blessed day. I kissed her feet ; she raised my head and, embracing me, said, ' Consider this opportunity as fortunate ; follow my advice, take me from this place, and let us go to some other country.' I answered, ' Come along.' After having thus spoken, we got out of the garden, but what with surprise and what with joy we were so confused and agitated that we could not use our hands and feet, and strayed away from the proper road ; we went along in quite a different direction, and could not find a place to rest ourselves in. The Princess being put out, said, ' I am quite knocked up, where is your house ? hasten to get there ; otherwise how will you manage to avoid danger ! My feet are covered with blisters ; I shall be compelled to sit down somewhere on the road ! ' I answered, ' My slave's house is close by, we have almost reached it ; be easy in your mind, and proceed on.' I, no doubt, told a lie, but I was greatly perplexed and did not know where to take her ! Right in our path a locked door appeared ; having hastily broken the lock, we entered the house. It was a splendid building, laid out with carpets, and bottles filled with wine, were tastefully arranged in the recesses ; and bread and roast-meat were ready in the kitchen. We were greatly tired, and each of us drank a bottle of portwine with the meat, and passed the whole night together in mutual bliss.

" In this scene of felicity when the morning broke, it was noised throughout the city that the Princess was missing. Proclamations were issued in every quarter and street ; and bawds and messengers were sent off with instructions to seize the Princess wherever they found her and to bring her to the King ; and guards of royal slaves were stationed at all the gates of the city. The guards had strict orders not to let even an ant pass without the King's permission, and it was announced that whoever would furnish any clue to the whereabouts of the Princess, should receive a dress of honour and a thousand pieces of

gold as a reward. The bawds roamed through the whole city, and entered every house.

"As evil luck would have it, I forgot to shut the door. An old witch, the aunt of Satan (may God blacken her face) with a rosary in her hand and quite veiled, finding the door open, walked in fearlessly and, standing before the Princess, lifted up her hands, and invoking blessings on her head, said, 'I pray to Heaven that he may enable you to enjoy the bliss of married life for long years and that the turban of thy husband may remain permanent! I am a poor beggar woman, and a widow, and I have a daughter who is in her full time, dying through the agonies of child-birth. I have not the means to purchase a farthing worth of oil that I may burn it in the lamp; food and drink are out of the question. If she should die, how shall I give her a burial, and if she gives birth to a child, what shall I give to the midwife and nurse, or how procure food and remedies for the mother? It is now two days since she ate and drank any thing.'

"O generous lady? give her out of your plenty and allow her a morsel of bread that she may eat it, and wash it down by a drink of water.' The Princess was moved; she desired her to approach and gave her four loaves, some roast-meat and a ring which she took off her little finger and said, "Having disposed of this ornament, get some trinkets made for your daughter and live in comfort and come from time to time to see me, the house is yours." The old wretch, having thoroughly accomplished the purpose for which she had come (for she had seen the very person she was in search of and had even secured her ring), poured her heartfelt blessing on my royal wife, saluted her, and walked away. She threw away the loaves and meat at the door, but held the ring tighter than ever in her hand, saying to herself, 'I have now a clue wherewith to trace the Princess.' As God in his mercy wished to preserve us from this calamity, just then the master of the house arrived: he was a brave, powerful soldier, mounted on an Arab horse, with a spear in his hand, and a stag hanging on one side of his saddle. Seeing the door of his house open, the lock broken, and the old witch coming out of it, he was transported with rage, and seizing the woman by her hair dragged her back to the house. He tied both her feet with a cord and hung her on the branch of a tree with her head down and her feet uppermost; so that in a few minutes the old devil expired in agonies. The moment I beheld the soldier's countenance I was so overpowered with fear that a death-like pallor overspread my face, and my heart began to tremble with dread. The

brave man seeing us both alarmed, bade us be of good cheer, as he did not mean to do us harm. ‘You have been very imprudent,’ said he, ‘in acting as you have ; you have done the deed and left the door open.’ The Princess smiling, said, ‘The Prince told me it was the house of his slave and brought me here under a deception.’ The soldier observed, ‘The Prince spoke nothing but the truth, for all the people are the slaves and servants of Princes—and are maintained and supported through their liberality and fostering care. This insignificant slave is yours without purchase ; but to conceal secrets is incompatible with reason. O Prince, your condescending to come to this humble abode, in company with the Princess, and honouring me with your august presence, would be a source of bliss to me in this, as well as in the next world, and by your visit you have exalted this slave. I am ready to sacrifice myself for you ; in no way will I grudge to devote my life or my property to your service ; you may rest here in perfect security there is not the slightest danger. If this vile bawd had gone away in safety, she would have involved you in dire calamities ; stay here now as long as you please ; and let this slave be informed of whatever you may require ; he will procure it. Let alone the King ; the angels themselves will not have the faintest idea of your being here.’ ‘The brave man spoke such words of encouragement and gave such assurances that we became more easy in our minds ; then I said. ‘Well done, you are a noble fellow ; when I am able, I shall make suitable return for your handsome behaviour ; what is your name ?’ He replied, ‘This slave’s name is Bahzad Khan.’ In short, for a period of full six months, he performed, with all his heart and soul, all the duties of service, and we passed our time in peace and comfort.

“One day, my country and my parents came to my recollection, which made me sad and thoughtful. Seeing me pensive and melancholy, Bahzad Khan came and stood before me with folded hands and said, ‘If this slave has been in any way remiss in the performance of his duty, then let the same be stated.’ I replied, ‘For God’s sake, don’t talk in that style ; your conduct towards us has been so generous that we have lived in this city so comfortably as one does in mother’s womb ; for I had done such a deed that every individual straw had become hostile to us. There was then not a single person in this vast town with whom we could have rested for a moment ; may God preserve you happy and prosperous.’ I then said to Bazhad Khan ‘If I could get to my own country, I could see my parents ; I am in this state and Heaven only knows how it has fared with them. I have gained the

ject for which I left the land of my birth ; and it is now right and proper that I should go back to my kith and kin; they are not in the least aware whether I am dead or alive; God knows what grievances have been preying on their hearts. The brave man said, ‘ It is very proper, let us depart.’ Saying this, he brought for me a Turkish horse which could go some two hundred miles a day, and a swift quick mare, which could travel with lightning speed* for the Princess and made us both mount. Then putting on his coat of mail and arming himself completely, he got upon his own charger, and said ‘ I, your slave, will take the lead, do you follow me with your mind’s at ease.’ When we arrived at the city gate, he gave a loud cry, and with his lance shattered the bolt, and, having thus struck terror into the hearts of the guards, he said, ‘ you villains go and tell your master that *Bahzad Khan* is carrying off the Princess Mihari Nigar and the Prince Kamgar, who is his son-in-law ; if he has one spark of manhood in him, let him come out, and receive his daughter by the might of his arm, don’t say that I carried her off in silence, and like a thief ; he has not the courage to meet me, then let him stay in the fort and enjoy himself.’ The matter was soon reported to the King ; he ordered his Minister and his Commander-in-Chief to seize the rebels and to bring them bound hand and foot to the royal presence, or to cut off their heads, and lay the same before the royal throne A little while after a large number of people appeared, and the earth and sky were darkened by dense columns of dust. Bahzad Khan placed the Princess and me on the abutment of an arch of the bridge, which, after the style of Jaunpur,† was composed of twelve arches, and he himself turned about, galloped his horse towards the pursuers ; he dashed in among them like a roaring lion , the whole force, panic-struck, was dispensed like the green scum floating on the surface of stagnant water ; and he sought his way to the two chiefs and struck off the heads of both. When the two chiefs were killed, the army fled in consternation, according to the saying, ‘ All depends on the head, when that is gone all is lost.’ ‡ The King at once came to their help with a large number of troops, all clad in coats of mail, but Bahzad Khan succeeded in utterly routing them too.

“ The King beat a hasty retreat ; the remark is only too true *that victory is the gift of God* ; but Bahzad Khan displayed such extraordinary bravery, that Rustam himself

* Literally, of unclipped wings.

† A city on the banks of the river Gaumati. It was built in the reign of Akbar.

‡ Literally, when the *bel* fruit bursts, it falls into pieces like *s*, many mustards.

could not have behaved more gallantly. When he saw that the field of battle was cleared, and that nobody was left to pursue him, and that there was nothing further to fear, he came confidently to the place where we were and taking the Princess and me along with him he pushed forward. A journey is always short-lived * ; we arrived at the confines of my country in a short time. Having written a letter, I sent it to the King, my father, informing him of my safe arrival ; the Asylum of the World was extremely pleased on reading it and returned his grateful thanks to God for His mercies. As the withered rice plant once more becomes living and vigorous by being watered, even so did the joyful news of my arrival revive his drooping spirits ; at the head of all his nobles and chiefs he came forward for the purpose of receiving us, as far as the banks of a large stream ; and a royal order was issued to the Superintendent of the river to cross us over it. Impelled by an eager desire to kiss my sire's feet, I plunged my horse into the river, and, swimming across, I reached the King, who clasped me with all the fondness of a doting father to his paternal bosom.

" At this moment, an unexpected calamity occurred. The horse, on which I was mounted, was perhaps the colt of the mare on which the Princess rode, or perhaps they had always lived together, for seeing my horse plunge into the river, the mare became restive, and threw itself instantly into the river, along with the Princess, after me, and began to swim.

" The Princess being frightened pulled the bridle ; the mare was tender-mouthed and turned over ; the Princess was submerged and ultimately sank with the mare, so that not the slightest trace of either was seen again. On beholding this circumstance, Bahzad Khan threw himself with his horse into the river to save the Princess, but he too got into the same whirlpool and could not get out of it ; he struggled hard with his hands and feet, but to no purpose, and he sank also.

" The protector of the world seeing this tragic scene sent for large nets and caused them to be thrown into the river, and ordered the boatmen and divers to search for the missing bodies. They sifted the whole river, but sand was the only thing they brought up every time, and they could not find the corpses. O Darwishes, this mendicant was so affected by this shocking occurrence that he became mad and crazy, and putting on the habit of a pilgrim took to

* Not correctly rendered in other *translations*.

a life of wandering, and he used to keep repeating the words, ‘ Such has been the fate of these three : you have seen that now ; wait and see the other side.’ Had the Princess disappeared and died anywhere, my heart could have found some consolation, for I would then have set off in quest of her, or would have had recourse to patience, and borne the loss ; but when she sank before my very eyes, and I could not render her the least assistance, I became sick of life. At last, I resolved upon drowning myself in the same stream, thinking that I might perhaps meet my adorable Princess in death. Accordingly, I entered that stream one night, with the intention of drowning myself, and advanced up to the neck in water ; I was on the point of stepping forward and plunging myself into the deep waters, when the same veiled horseman, who imparted glad tidings to you and saved you both,* appeared on the scene and laid hold of my arm ; he comforted me, and said, ‘ Cheer up, for the Princess and Bahzad Khan are alive ; why do you lose life for nothing ? Such events do happen in the world, do not despair of God’s mercy ; if you live, you will some day or other meet the two persons, for whose sake you are deliberately throwing yourself into the jaws of death. Proceed now to the kingdom of Rum ; two other heart-broken mendicants have gone there already, when you meet them you will realize the object of your heart.’ O Darwishes ! in accordance with the orders of my spiritual guide, I have come to your exalted presence ; I have a strong hope that each of us will now attain his wishes. These were the adventures of this pilgrim, which he has related to you fully and faithfully ”

* Addressing the first and second Darwishes.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE FOURTH DARWESH.

The fourth Darwesh began, with his eyes filled with tears, the narration of his adventures as follows :—

VERSES.

The sorrowful story of my adventures now hear,
Pay some attention to my whole history, hear.
For what reason I have come afflicted thus far,
I will relate it all to you the cause, hear.

“ O spiritual preceptors, be a little attentive. This mendicant, who is reduced to such a miserable condition, is the son of the King of China ; I was brought up with extreme affection and delicacy, and was properly educated. I was unacquainted with the good and evil of the world and was under the impression that my life wⁿ’ ever pass in the same manner.

“ In the midst of this extreme thoughtlessness a sad event took place, namely, the King, who was my father, breathed his last. In this dying moments he sent for his younger brother, my uncle, and thus addressed him, ‘ I now leave my property and my empire behind me, and am going to depart this life ; but do you carry out my last wishes and act the part of an elder. Until the Prince, who is the heir to the throne and the royal umbrella has become of age and has sense to administer the affairs of the Kingdom, do you act as regent and do not permit the army and the husbandmen to be ill-treated and oppressed. When the Prince has reached his years of maturity, help him with your fatherly care and advice, and make over to him the government ; having wedded him to your daughter, Hushan Akhtar, retire yourself from the throne ; if you act as I have pointed out, the sovereignty will remain in my family and its interests will not be jeopardised in the least.’

“ When the King had said this much, he resigned his soul to his Maker ; my uncle assumed the sovereign power and began to regulate the affairs of government. He issued orders that I should remain in the seraglio, and should not come out of it till I had developed into a full-grown young man. Until my fourteenth year I was brought up among the queens and princesses and female attendants, and used to play and jump about. Having heard of my contemplated marriage I was happy, and elated by this hope I became thoughtless, and often said to myself, I shall now shortly ascend the throne, and be married. The world lives by hope. I often used to go and sit with Mubarak, an Ethiopian slave who had been brought up in my deceased sire’s service, and in whom great confidence was placed, as he

was intelligent and devoted to his master's house. He, too, loved me much, and seeing me advancing to the years of maturity, would frequently observe, 'God be praised, O Prince, you are now a young man; if it please heaven, your uncle will shortly fulfil the injunctions of the late King, the shadow of the Most High, and having bestowed his daughter on you in marriage, will abdicate your father's throne in your favour.'

"One day it happened that a common female servant gave me, without reason, such a slap that the marks of her five fingers remained imprinted on my cheek. I went to Mubarak who embraced me tenderly, and wiping away my tears, with his sleeve, he said, 'Come, I will take you to-day to the King; he will perhaps be kind to you when he sees you, and thus making you qualified in years, will surrender to you your rights.' He forthwith conducted me to the presence of the King. My uncle treated me with extreme kindness and affection before the Court and asked, 'Why are you so dejected and cast down, and why have you come here to-day?' Mubarak answered, 'He has come here to-day to say something to Your Majesty.' On hearing this he said of himself, 'I will now shortly celebrate the young Prince's nuptials.' Mubarak replied, 'It will be a most happy event.' The King at once summoned the astrologers and fortune tellers into his presence, and with pretended interest enquired, 'In this year, what month, and what day and what hour is auspicious, that I may order preparations for the Prince's marriage to be made?' They, divining the King's real intentions, and making their calculations, said, 'Great King! the whole of this year is unlucky; no day in any of the lunar months appears propitious; if this whole year pass away in safety, then the next is most propitious for this meritorious act.*'

"The King looked towards Mubarak and said, 'Lead the Prince back into the seraglio; if it please Heaven, after the expiration of this year, I will make over his trust to him; let him be perfectly easy in his mind, and diligently attend to his studies.' Mubarak made his obeisance and, taking me along with him, re-conducted me into the seraglio. Two or three days after this, I went to Mubarak; on seeing me he began to weep; I was surprised and asked him, saying, 'Father, is all well, what is the cause of your tears?' Then that well-wisher (who loved me with heart and soul), said, 'I took you the other day to that tyrant; if I had known it I would not have carried you there' I was amazed and asked, 'What harm has

* That is, for the celebration of the nuptiale.

resulted from my going there ? Pray, let me know every-
thing truly. He said, 'All the nobles, ministers, and officers
of State, of every rank and grade, who served your father,
were extremely pleased to see you, and began to offer up
their thanks to God, saying, 'Now our Prince is a man, and
fit to govern the kingdom ; in a short time he will get his
rights, for he is the rightful heir to the empire; he will
then appreciate our merits, and do justice to the worth of
his hereditary vassals.' Their words were repeated to that
faithless monster, who, on hearing the same, felt as if a
cobra was rolling over his breast. He sent for me secretly,
and said, 'O Mubarak, act now in such a way that by
some strategem or other the Prince may be destroyed, and
all my fears and apprehensions on his account may be
completely removed, so that I may feel perfectly secure
and safe.' Since then I have been like one bereft of his
senses, for your uncle has become the enemy of your life.
When I heard this evil intelligence from Mubarak, I was
dead without being killed and falling at his feet, from
fear of my life, I said, 'I give up my claim to the
throne, only let my life be saved by any means you can
think of.' That faithful servant raised my head, clasped
me to his bosom, and said, 'There is no danger ; a plan
has suggested itself to me; if it succeeds there is nothing
to apprehend ; whilst we have life, we have everything.
It is probable that by this scheme your life will be saved,
and you will attain the desires of your heart.'

" Having given me this assurance he took me with
him, and repaired to the apartment where the late King,
my father, used to sit and sleep ; and set my mind at ease
in every way. A chair was placed there; he told me to take
hold of one of its legs, and laying hold of the other hand
self, we removed the chair : and he lifted up the carpet
that was under it, and set about digging the floor. All
of a sudden a window came in sight, to which were attached
a chain and a lock. He called me near him ; I thought
within myself that he meant to murder me, and to bury me
in the place he had dug ; death, with all its terrors appeared
before my eyes, but, having no other choice, I moved
slowly and silently towards him, repeating the *confession
of faith* (the *Kalma*)^{*} in my mind. I then beheld a build-
ing, with four rooms inside that window, and in each of
those rooms ten large vases of gold were hanging by
chains ; the mouth of each vase was closed with a brick of
gold, on which was seated the figure of a monkey, studded
with jewels. On counting I found that there were in all
thirty-nine vases of the kind in the four apartments ; the

*This is curious, for China is not, and perhaps has never been,
a Muhammadan country.

fortieth one was filled with pieces of gold, and on its mouth there was neither the figure of a monkey nor the usual gold brick, and I also beheld a reservoir filled up to the brim with precious stones. I asked Mubarak ' O my father, what enchantment is this ? to whom does this place belong, and for what use are these figures ? ' He answered, ' The following is the story of these figures of monkeys which you see :— Your late father, from his youth, formed a friendship, and kept up an intercourse with Malik Sadik, who is the king of the spirits and demons.

" Accordingly, once a year His late Majesty used to visit Malik Sadik and remain with him about a month ; and every time he paid a visit he took with him various kinds of essences* and the curiosities of this country as a present. When he took his leave, Malik Sadik used to present him with the figure of a monkey made of emeralds, and our King used to bring it and place it in these underground apartments ; none but myself was acquainted with the circumstance. Once this slave remarked to His Majesty, ' Asylum of the World, you carry with you rarities and curiosities worth *lakhs* of rupees, and you bring back from there a lifeless monkey of stone ; what is the gain from the exchange in the end ? ' In answer to my question he smilingly said, ' Beware how you reveal this secret to any one ; you must be absolutely cautious and reserved on this point. Each of these lifeless monkeys which you see has a thousand powerful demons subject to its authority, ready to execute its orders ; but until I have collected full forty monkeys, to long are these of no use, and will be of no advantage whatever so me.' So one monkey was wanting to complete the required number in the year when the King died.

" All this trouble has been of no avail, since it has not practically produced any good. O Prince ! I recollect the circumstance on seeing your helpless and forlorn condition, and resolved within myself to lead you by some means or other to Malik Sadik, and to tell him all about your uncle's cruelty. It is highly probable that he, remembering your father's friendship for him, may bestow on you the one monkey which is wanting to complete the efficient number ; then, with their assistance, you may regain your kingdom, and reign in peace and tranquility over *China* and *Mashin* † at least your life will be secured from the present danger by this proceeding, if no other advantage accrues to you therefrom. I see no

**Jins*, *devs*, and *paris* are supposed to live on essences, and demons on coarser food.

† Same as *China*.

other way to save you from the murderous hands of your uncle except by resorting to the scheme I have propounded. On hearing these consoling circumstances from *Mubarak* I said, 'O my father, you are now the master (disposer) of my life, whatever is best with regard to me, do it.'

" Having given me every encouragement, he went to the market place to purchase some essence of roses and some *bakhur** and every thing else that he thought was suitable to be offered as a present to *Malik Sadik*.

" The following day, he went to my impious uncle, who was a prototype of *Abu Ja'afar* and said, 'Asylum of the World ! I have thought of a plan in my mind to effect the Prince's destruction, and if you order me, I will do it.' The wretch, being highly pleased, asked, ' What is that plan ? ' *Mubarak* answered, ' Be awaiting him to death here, Your Majesty will get audience of me in every way ; I will take him out to the woods and kill him, bury him, and return, and nobody will know anything about the matter.'

" On hearing this scheme of *Mubarak* the King said, ' It is a capital plan; I don't wish him to live ; I am greatly disturbed on his account, and if thou relievevest me from this anxiety, I will, in return for this service, reward thee handsomely. Take him where thou likest, and finish him and bring me the agreeable intelligence that he is no more.'

" *Mubarak* having thus set his mind at ease with regard to the usurper, and having taken all the curiosities and rarities with him, set off from the city at midnight, and bent his steps in the direction of the north. For the whole month we kept travelling incessantly. One night, as we were trudging along, *Mubarak* exclaimed, ' Glory be praised ! we have at last reached our destination.' On hearing this exclamation I said, ' O friend, what is it that you say ! ' He replied, ' O prince, do you not see the army of the Genii ? ' I can see nothing except yourself, I replied, Upon this, *Mubarak* drew out a box containing collyrium and with a needle applied it to my eyes. It was Solomon's *Antimony*. Instantly the genii host, their tents, and the encampments of their army, became visible to me ; they were all good-looking and well-dressed. Having recognized *Mubarak* they each embraced him with affection, and had their jokes with him. Proceeding on we finally reached the royal pavilions, and entered the Court. I perceived they were well and tastefully lighted, and

* A kind of frankincense.

+ *Abu Ja'afar* or father of ignorance, was an uncle of the prophet Muhammad and deadly enemy of his religion.

chairs of every description were arranged in double rows on which were seated persons of learning, erudition, philosophers, devotees, nobles, and officers of state ; servants of every grade and degree were in attendance, and in the centre there was a throne studded with jewels, on which was seated, with an air of state and dignity, and reclining on pillows, the King Malik Sadik with a crown on his head, and clad in a tunic resplendent with pearls. I went near him and made him my obeisance ; he asked me in a tone of kindness to sit down, and after that we began to discuss the good cheer. When we had finished our meal, and the cloth was removed, he, having looked towards Mubarak, asked him to relate his circumstances. Mubark answered, ' This Prince's uncle now rules in place of his father, and has become the enemy of his life, and it is for this reason that I have run off with him from there and brought him to Your Majesty's presence. He is an orphan, and the empire belongs to him by right, but nobody can do anything without a protector. With Your Majesty's help this wronged youth may yet recover his kingdom ; recollect the value of his father's services, lend him your assistance, bestow upon him the fortieth monkey that is yet wanting, so that the efficient number may be completed, and the Prince, having recovered his inheritance with their aid, may pray for Your Majesty's long life and happiness. Except your Majesty's protection he has apparently nothing else to depend upon.'

JAH ASAF